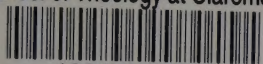


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LECTURES
ON
CHURCH DIFFICULTIES.

Rixis, probris, minis est publice pulsatus :
Mitem furor impetit, fidum ejulatus :
Non tacet non titubat, non est immutatus :
Non est ante Baalim timide curvatus.

Cum Naboth legitime, mente stabilitâ,
Perdam, ait, potius vineam cum vitâ
Quam in hortum olerum sit, me dante, trita :
Et tutando vineam, stat armatus ita.

GERVAS. CICESTREN.

5131
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1871

LECTURES

ON

CHURCH DIFFICULTIES,

BY

THE REV. J. M. NEALE, M.A.,

WARDEN OF SACKVILLE COLLEGE.

With Introduction

BY

THE REV. W. J. E. BENNETT,

FROOME-SELWOOD.



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EDITORS' NOTE.

THE author of this volume, in the Preface to the first edition (April, 1852,) thus states its scope and intention.

“I was led to consider whether there were not practical difficulties in our present position, which we all feel, but which, at present, have not engaged the attention of any writer. I thought that suggestions on these points might not, perhaps, be altogether useless, and the present volume is the result.

“Many of these Lectures, therefore, were never really delivered; some, it will be seen, would scarcely be suitable for delivery in a pulpit. They all, however imperfect, and however unworthy of their design, have but one object, the promotion (if in the smallest degree God grant it so) of the efficient working of the Church of England.”

The Sisters of S. Margaret's have prepared this re-issue of a book published nearly twenty years ago, in accordance with the wishes of many persons who consider that the difficulties of that period are

parallel, if not identical, with those of the present day, and who desire to study the views and opinions held by a man distinguished by remarkable foresight, and extraordinary knowledge of ecclesiastical history. Two sermons have been removed, as having no bearing on the subjects discussed; and an Appendix has been added, containing further expression of Dr. Neale's ideas on some of those matters, as set forth in articles contributed by him to the "Christian Remembrancer" and "Ecclesiastic."

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INTRODUCTION.

BY

REV. W. J. E. BENNETT,

FROOME-SELWOOD.

INTRODUCTION.

It is a question whether if our dear friend Dr. Neale had been spared to the present day, he would have thought it good to alter or to modify the opinions which he has expressed in these Lectures on Church Difficulties.

But it is a question which will meet, in every heart that loves the Church, with a ready answer; and, at the request of the Sisters of S. Margaret, I undertake, without any hesitation to make that answer. I affirm that the difficulties which existed in 1852 (the date of the first publication of these Lectures) are multiplied tenfold in 1871 (the date of this Preface); and there can be no doubt but that the same unsparing hand that set forth those difficulties as they existed then, would have been raised, even with a more vigorous effort, to expose and to lament them now. Any modification of the censures with which he so justly denounced the shortcomings of his day, would surely not have met with any tone of softening or

qualifying; but would, in his fearless and generous spirit, have gone on rather in an accelerated ratio in proportion to the increased wrongs of the Church which he loved so much and served so heartily.

Let the reader go back to the year 1852, and take a cursory review of the main points on which Dr. Neale has dwelt. Then let him follow them up to the present day and judge for himself.

I should select as the most salient points the following :—

I.—*The Status of the Bishops.* He says in 1852: “ Let us be honest to our Bishops and to ourselves ; let us be deeply thankful that for their moral character, we need fear a comparison with no Church under the sun. But to call their vacillations prudence, their indifference impartiality, their timidity caution, or their weakness wisdom, is to deceive ourselves, and as far as in us lies, to deceive them also. . . . The Bishops, as a body, have done nothing in defence of her [the Church], and by far the majority of individual prelates have either temporized with or defended heresy”— p. 27.

To illustrate this, the reader will go back to the history of Dr. Hampden, forced by the Prime Minister of the day, Lord John Russell, upon the See of Hereford, in the year 1847-8. He will

remember that the election of Dr. Hampden, by the Chapter of Hereford, was disputed; that the Dean, Dr. Merewether, refused to allow the election, on the ground of Dr. Hampden's alleged heresy, and his condemnation by the University of Oxford; that thirteen of the then existing Bishops remonstrated; that in the confirmation at Bow Church, opposers being ready, the Vicar-General interfered and stopped them, and that in spite of all the attempts of the orthodox portion of the Church, to set aside the election, and to prove its illegality, Dr. Hampden was (we might almost say, forcibly) thrust upon the Church under fear of the statute of Præmunire. He will remember also, that in the very crisis of the difficulty the good Archbishop Dr. Howley died, that Dr. Sumner, known to be subservient to the Government, was appointed in his place, and that almost his first act was, in the teeth of all these canonical and legal difficulties, to consecrate Dr. Hampden; that the Dean of Hereford did, as the last resort, protest against the installation of Dr. Hampden, but that he nevertheless was installed, and though never recognised by a great portion of the Church as any other than Bishop Hampden, still he became—his heresy unretracted—*de facto* though not *de jure* a Bishop. No doubt all this was passing through the

mind of Dr. Neale, when he said, "*The Bishops as a body have done nothing in defence of the Church.*"

But are we better now? A very short memory can reach as far back as 1869-70, and will dwell on a somewhat similar scene creating unusual excitement in the Church in that year. It will recall the history of the "Essays and Reviews," writings universally condemned as heretical and infidel; and yet Mr. Gladstone, once the hope of the Church, forcing one of the principal authors of these Essays upon the Episcopal throne. The Clergy remonstrated; even the world cried out "Shame"—but the old cry of "Præmunire" rode over all; and the majority of the Bishops, more or less, connived and aided in the miserable work.

And within the same memory the names of Colenso and of Jenner will arise: the one testifying to the tenacity with which Erastianism may retain its hold of temporal goods, and the other the looseness with which the same Erastianism may shake off the responsibility of all Ecclesiastical canons and laws.

Colenso! Who will not remember the "*Episcopal body*" in their sad perplexity proposing for the See of Natal a new Bishop, namely, the unfortunate, or shall we not say fortunate, Vicar

of Wantage; at one time recommending him, and at another time abandoning their recommendation; at last the Vicar of Wantage set aside altogether, and another Bishop appointed—consecrated indeed, but not by *their* hands—contending against the enemy, but not by *their* will; schism and division rending the unhappy flock of Natal, and the Bishops of England looking on without a hand to help?

And what of the case of Dr. Jenner? Taken from his Parochial duties as a Parish Priest, and nominated Bishop of Dunedin, his diocese duly apportioned, the consecration duly performed, he was sent forth by the voice of the Church to his foreign mission. But, lo! the people of Dunedin lifted up their voice in contradiction, and refused him. He returns. What say his brother Bishops? They know not what to say: now advising this way, now that, until it all ends in the miserable and utter discomfiture of Dr. Jenner; and it is now said that another Bishop is to be, or has been, appointed in his place.

Observe the strange inconsistency—to say nothing of the want of justice in all these proceedings. Take the cases of Hampden and Jenner and set them side by side. The Crown chooses Dr. Hampden—but the people reject him. The statute of

“Præmunire” is thrust forward, and the people are crushed.

Dr. Jenner is duly nominated—duly consecrated—duly sent forth. The people object: no statute of Præmunire here. The “*people*” prevail.

Where there is no prerogative the “*people*” are omnipotent; where there is an Establishmentarian status, and a seat in the House of Lords the “*people*” are set aside: and in the midst of all stands the Church, represented by her Bishops, and is silent. How can we account for this anomaly, but as Dr. Neale says in the time-serving of weakness which we cannot call wisdom; of vacillation which we hesitate to call prudence; and of indifference, for which we should use a sad misnomer if we called it impartiality.

II. Let us now take another point. The Sacramental system. And 1. *Marriage*. When Dr. Neale wrote, his reference was to the year 1836, when marriage was first pronounced by the English Legislature to be no more than a civil contract; and a law was made that a bargain between a man and woman entered into before the Civil Registrar to live together as man and wife was sufficient to make marriage valid. Sacramental grace as conveyed by the blessing of the Church, from that time was dispensed with, as of necessity a part of marriage.

But what would Dr. Neale have said, had it been his duty to comment on the Divorce Court of 1857? The withdrawal of all jurisdiction over souls in the sins of adultery and incest, (the cases of which before had been committed to a spiritual judge), and the multiplication in Common Law Courts of every foul scene of wickedness published to an unclean world, in suits for divorce which seem to have no end? And what moreover would he have said of the attempts to legalize marriage between those who stand to each other in the relation of brother and sister, and so to undermine the whole social system of the Church and the domestic sanctity of family ties? Happily the House of Lords has hitherto saved us from this pollution; but the House of Commons is the omnipotent power; or if not, how do we know what the Royal Prerogative may do in the hands of an unscrupulous Prime Minister?

2. *Confession.* In the Appendix B, marked "*Anti-Confessional Agitation*," as well as in the Lecture, No. XIV., in the present edition of this work, we have in very forcible language, the opinions of Dr. Neale on this all-important subject. His writing there is directed to the popular outcries of the mob, and the lectures of such persons as the notorious Murphy. But does it not seem pro-

phetic of what occurred in the subsequent case of S. Barnabas' Church, Pimlico, and its curate, Mr. Poole? It is certainly a "Church difficulty" that a Bishop should, at the ordination of a Priest, convey to him the authority of the Church in the words, "*Whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted,*" and when the authority is exercised, that the unfortunate Priest should be summarily deprived of his license to serve God, and be cast out as one unworthy to perform the offices of the Church. It was first the Bishop and then the Archbishop, and then both together, with all the authority of their office and all the prestige naturally attached to their positions, who fell into this "Anti-confessional agitation," as though they had been partisans of the mob and of Murphy.

It may be said that I speak too strongly. Let the reader then refer to the *Guardian*, Feb. 2nd, 1859, and he will (remembering that the *Guardian* is no anti-Episcopal newspaper) read thus:—

"We fix our attention on the gross outrage of every principle of common fairness which [this case] displays. Mr. Poole's suspension is founded upon certain admissions which the Bishop asserts him to have made. He [Mr. Poole] denies that he has made them, and asks what they are. The Bishop declines to tell them, and never tells the

Archbishop either. It now appears that the supposed admissions *never were written down at all*, and therefore never have existed in a shape which the Archbishop *could* have seen, or *could* have formed an opinion on them. Yet he tells Mr. Poole that he agrees with the Bishop as to the effect of certain disputed statements which he has never seen, which he has never heard, and which unseen and unheard he makes the ground for professional ruin to Mr. Poole. The simplest statement of these facts is surely their severest condemnation."

Such, indeed, was the "Anti-confessional agitation" among Bishops! They who have the power of the keys and sit upon thrones to execute justice!

3. *Confirmation.* Dr. Neale inveighed with the spirit of indignation against Bishops who forbade little children to come unto Christ and receive the Holy Ghost. Is it not the same, with a few bright exceptions, now? Do we not see in almost every Episcopal programme the same stiff formalism, by which the Holy Spirit and His gifts are limited to a certain number of years, and not to the heart and the life? What would he have said if he had seen innocent little children sent back from the place of confirmation in disgrace, because

they were not old enough? What if he had read the correspondence between Mr. Liddell and the Bishop of Durham, wherein the Priest is found pleading that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are free to those of whom our Lord said, "Suffer little children to come unto *Me*, and forbid them not," but the Bishop ruling that the intellect and the number of years are to be the measures of God's love, the criterion of moral fitness, and the channel of Sacramental grace.

4. *Baptism.* Dr. Neale had passed through the ordeal of the Gorham controversy. It had before his time been blasphemously said that Baptism and the reception of the Holy Ghost, or the new Birth, had no necessary connection with each other; and that although our Blessed Lord had joined the two together in his conversation with Nicodemus, yet that was a mistake; and we might very well baptize, immerse, or pour water over a child in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, without the slightest imputation of the Holy Ghost being there. To this our dear friend had succumbed on the ground that however dreadful the toleration of such heresy on the part of the Bishops might be, still there was toleration for the other side also; and while Mr. Gorham might be instituted legally to the

living of Bampton-Speke, it was equally open to him, (Dr. Neale) on the other side to assert, preach, and define the very opposite, and still continue Warden of Sackville College. It was a church difficulty certainly, and a remarkable anomaly, that a Priest should be compelled to pour water over a child, and say "*I baptize thee,*" and having so poured the water to go on and say "*Seeing this child is regenerate,*" and nevertheless be allowed in his sermons, his conversations, or his writings, to say that the child was *not* regenerate. That was certainly a church difficulty, but it remained with those who asserted the enigma to unravel it, and, with the Bishops, as bound to banish and drive away every heresy to account for their quiescence in the uncomfortable position in which the law had placed them.

But if this were a difficulty as to Baptism in 1852, what would our dear friend have said if he had lived to the year 1871, to see the treatment to be received by the other great Sacrament.

5. *The Holy Eucharist.* We have certain traditions in this Church of England, as well as all other Churches have. We have come down from the Apostolic ages. We inherit the Apostolic customs. We breathe the spirit of a holy antiquity equal to any other Church

on the face of the earth. But some say we are only of the growth of a three hundred years of Protestantism. We join issue, and hence the contest of the ceremonies of the Church in the Holy Eucharist. Not a contest whether there shall be *any* ceremonies ; for he that stands at one time in his prayers and kneels at another ; he that wears a black gown at one time and a surplice at another ; he that sings the Psalms of David in metrical rhyme at one time and says them in prose at another ; he that stands before what he with rigid determination calls a “ Table ” and at another time kneels at the side of it—performs a ceremony, and adheres to rites. So that, when we find the Church split in sunder by a faction that attacks the ceremonies of the Holy Eucharist, it is not against ceremonies in the abstract but against a certain *peculiarity* of ceremony, which that faction does not approve of. *My* ceremonies are good and proper, says the faction, *yours* are wrong. Why? Because they do not agree with ours. This is a Church difficulty. Dr. Neale might have witnessed the embryo seed of it lying latent in the ground, but it is curious that it did not make any impression on him. He hardly alludes to it, because it had not then attracted notice. The election of Bishops had made many a Church diffi-

culty, and so had Mr. Gorham, and so had the Convocation, and so had the Marriage Laws, and so had Confirmation, and so had the Simony of the priesthood in buying and selling the gifts and offices of the Holy Ghost, and so had the question of Confession. But it was the mercy of God to our dear friend, that he had no share in that which has become now the greatest, the most awful, and most likely the final difficulty of our poor, molested, worried, State-ridden Church, in the question of *The Holy Eucharist*.

Let me speak a few words on *this* Church difficulty.

1. As to the ceremonies with which we should clothe that Holy Sacrament. In 1850 we decorated our Altars with varied colours, with flowers, with lights, and with a cross. We ventured to stand *before* or in the "*midst*" of the Altar, to signify the act of Sacrifice; we thought it right to kneel in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament; in short all we could do, after ancient tradition, we did, to honour our Blessed Lord when He came to us. The consequences of all this have come upon us since Dr. Neale's time. First, as it is called, the "Liddell Case," then the "Mackonochie Case," next the "Purchas Case." All these show what Church difficulties are in our day, while they were happily unknown to Dr. Neale.

But if this be the case with mere external ceremonies, how much more when now in these later years the attack has shaped itself against Doctrine.

In the general history of the Church from the Reformation downwards, there has always been a school of theology that depreciated Sacramental grace, and has taught that the Holy Eucharist is nothing more than a solemn memorial, or act of Christian communion. It is this school adopting Protestantism for its watchword, and filled with Puritanism in its spirit, that now brings among us the culminating point of our Church difficulties. It joins with another school, that of Latitudinarianism, commonly called "The Broad Church," and so in its conjunction poisons the vast mass of ordinary people with heresy of the worst description. And this heresy is not confined to the lower places, or among such as are called, "the inferior clergy," but revels in open defiance of the Catholic faith among the very highest. Dr. Neale would not have contemplated the possibility that among the dignitaries of the Church one should be found, who in the most ancient Cathedral of London should offer the Holy Sacrifice openly and ostentatiously in the invited presence of Non-conformists, and among others, a Socinian teacher. And even if he might perchance have entertained

for a moment such a possibility, he could not have carried forward the idea into the fact, of such an one offering from the Altar the Body and Blood of the Divine Saviour for the Communion of that Socinian. And even if he had in his imagination ventured so far as this, still if he had been told that in that offering and in that Communion, many Bishops should have joined, and having joined, should have applauded the act, and publicly defended it; I feel sure that the account of such an outrage would in his mind have been treated with positive incredulity. Yet we find it so. *The Times* newspaper, naturally as the organ of infidelity, claims this action of the Dean of Westminster and the Bishops as a triumph to the cause of Religious Liberty. It describes the scene of this Communion in rounded periods.

“In front of this Table, (at the head of Henry VII.’s tomb,) thus itself a monument of the extinct strifes of former days (?), and round the grave of the youthful Protestant King (Edward VI.) knelt together the band of scholars and divines, consisting of representatives of almost every form of Christian belief in England. There were Bishops of the Established Church, two of them by their venerable years connected with the past generation, there were the represen-

tatives of our historic Cathedrals and Collegiate Churches, of our learned Universities, of our laborious parochial charges, and of our chief ecclesiastical Convocation, and with these, intermingled without distinction, were ministers of the Established and of the Free Church of Scotland, and of almost every Nonconformist Church in England—Independent, Baptist, Wesleyan, Unitarian. It is not to be supposed that each one of those present entered with equal agreement into every part of the Service; but it is surely not without a hopeful significance that neither on the side of the Church, nor of Nonconformity was there any "*Religious difficulty*" raised as to a joint participation, on such an occasion in the most venerable and sacred ordinance of the Christian religion."

Then after reciting many of the historical scenes of antiquity that have passed within those sacred walls, it continues :—

"But it may be doubted whether it [Westminster Abbey] has ever been the scene of an event so fraught, if rightly considered, with possibilities of kindly intercourse between jarring factions, and pacific solution of warring problems, as that which happened silent and unobserved, on the 22nd of June" [1870].

That was very well as far as concerns the outside world of ignorance or infidelity, which knows not or derides the doctrines of the Catholic faith. We may pardon the "*Times*." It was natural. But what of the "Religious difficulty" involved in the defence of this act by the Bishops who shared in it?

It was not to be expected that so flagrant an act as joining in communion with a Socinian, or as he would generally be called, a Unitarian, should be passed over without comment. It was very soon brought before the Upper House of Convocation by a memorial from the English Church Union; but to the surprise of all, the act of the Dean so far from being censured was positively defended, and indeed somewhat applauded, by most of the Bishops there assembled. Some said that "*the Reception of the Holy Communion rested with the conscience of those who came to receive It.*" If so, what becomes of the discipline of the Church, the power of the keys, the promotion of morals, and the unity of Faith? Others said, that they "*were not in the habit of thinking that Non-conformists were not Christians,*" and that they believed, that "*those who were admitted by Baptism into the Christian Church were members of the Christian Church,*" and upon this premiss they founded their conclusion, that the

Socinian being a Nonconformist, it was lawful for him to receive Communion in Westminster Abbey.

But here is a Church difficulty. For when we look to the Prayer Book we find an office entitled "*The Ministration of Private Baptism of Children in houses.*" The office is strictly remedial, and meant to supply such a defect in Church-membership as the Bishops were alluding to in the case of Nonconformists wishing to join the Communion of the Church. The Nonconformists are generally baptized in meeting-houses; and if they wish in after-life to become members of the Church in contradiction to Nonconformity, they must take the pledges of the Church as set forth in that office. The Rubric directs the Priest, in case a child is brought to him who has been baptized in a house, or elsewhere than in the Church, to question and examine very carefully as to the form and matter of such Baptism; and after he is satisfied as to the form and matter, then to demand certain pledges of morals and faith. When all this is done—but not before—the child or person is to be *received*. The Priest says, "*We receive this child [or person] into the Congregation of Christ's Flock, and do sign him with the sign of the Cross.*" It is at *that* time and not the time of Baptism (if such Baptism has been in any place other than the Church) that

the Dissenter or Nonconformist enters upon his membership. We do not speak in vague language of the "Christian Church" but of the Church in which we are Priests and Bishops in England.

But there is another Church difficulty in regard of one who is not only a Nonconformist, but also a Socinian. For, in the account of the proceedings in Convocation :

1. The Bishops seem without any demur to call by the name of *Christian* one who, as the Bishop of Salisbury (Dr. Moberly) designates him, was a *gentleman notoriously a Unitarian*,* and they speak of such as "admitted by Baptism into the Christian Church." Now if this Socinian had *always* been a Socinian, or was of Socinian parents, his Baptism could not have been in the name of the Holy Trinity, and if not, he could not have been "*a Christian*;" but if on the other hand he had been validly baptised as an infant, he must from his being "*notoriously a Unitarian*," have afterwards become so, by an heretical denying of our Blessed Lord's Divinity; and so he must with the knowledge of the Bishops have fallen into such a deadly heresy, as to have utterly invalidated his communion in the Church.

* See his speech in Convocation.

2. But in either of these cases there still remains a further difficulty, for there is another Sacrament intervening between Baptism and the Communion, namely, Confirmation—which being a Sacrament specially within the Bishop's custody, must even by the Rubric, (to say nothing of the Canons as to Schism and Heresy), have barred the approach of the Socinian, (or as he calls himself, Unitarian,) to the Altar—he having neither been “*confirmed, nor willing to be confirmed.*”

3. This is all made certain and acknowledged by the gentleman himself. For in his subsequent letter he openly proclaimed his heresy and condemned the Church; for he speaks (a) “*of the departure from simple Scriptural language, which still unfortunately in 1870, as in 1662, so strongly marks the Communion of the Church of England;*” and (b) he acknowledges the fact of not joining in the Nicene Creed at the time of Communion: “*Nor did I join in reciting the Nicene Creed, and he supposes that they (the Bishops) were willing to tolerate his silence.*” *

Upon the whole then, here is an act done by those in the highest authority, both against discipline and against doctrine, which utterly

* See his letter in *Times* newspaper and other papers, signed by himself.

perplexes us as we read it. And not only against doctrine and discipline, but against Holy Scripture itself. Charity is a most excellent gift ; but in this case, as it was exercised by most of the Bishops, it was carried too far. It led them into the danger of dishonouring their Lord, and for the sake of a comprehensive absorption of every Creed, they ran the risk of denying the Godhead of the Only Begotten Son. The rules of S. Paul and of S. John as to the dealing of the faithful with the unbelievers are well known ;—how they are not to be “*yoked together* ;” how we are “*to mark*,” and not only to mark but to “*avoid those who cause divisions, contrary to the doctrine which we have learned*,” how we are to “*withdraw ourselves from every brother, who walketh not after the tradition received*” (of the Apostles)—we of the Church “*being commanded to do so in the name of the Lord Jesus*.”

Yet here we find—not only, no “*withdrawal*” no “*marking*” no “*avoiding*”—but a seeking for, an association with, an invitation to an unbeliever to join in and be of one communion with the Bishops of the Church of Christ. Some of the Bishops indeed seem to say, and many others at the time asserted, that the Nonconformists presented themselves for Communion of their own

accord; that they came uninvited, "*not even the Celebrant had asked them to come.*"* But this is entirely disclaimed by the gentleman in question, who says that he *was* asked to come. Observe his own words in a letter to the *Times*:

"It would appear as if the Nonconformist members of the Revision companies had presented themselves at the Communion service without any kind of previous invitation; speaking for myself alone I shall be glad if you would allow me to say that *such was not the case*. Most probably it would not have occurred to me to attend the service had I not thought that I *was invited to do so*, and that my presence would not be objected to, but even *welcomed, by the other communicants.*"†

Such is the unhappy scene which occurred in Westminster Abbey, on June 22nd, 1870, and which will be handed down to history by the name, by which it is now commonly designated, "*The Westminster Scandal*"—a scandal indeed, and rock of offence to every pious believer in the faith and discipline of the Church of England.

But it may be urged, why set it forth again! Why not let it perish in oblivion and be forgotten?

* Bishop of Salisbury's speech in Convocation.

† The letter—in the *Times*—the italics are mine.

For this reason—that it is the first blow aimed by those in high places at the doctrine of the Real Presence ; because the very existence of the Church is imperilled, when the doctrines of Sacramental Grace, and the adoration of our Lord in the Holy Eucharist, are questioned by those in power.

The judgment in the doctrine of Baptism in the Gorham case was to permit heresy, while it also permitted Catholicity. That was Latitudinarianism. But the judgment in Eucharistic doctrine if it should be against the Real Presence will not be to tolerate heresy—for that question will not be before the Court. It is tolerated now. No one objects ; no one cares for ; no one brings the deniers of our Blessed Lord's Eucharistic Presence into a court to be tried. They are perfectly free and let alone. Even Unitarians are communicated by the Dean of one of our Cathedrals, and the generosity of Religious Liberty applauds the act, and Bishops join in it. The Church difficulty does not lie in that quarter ; but it lies with us on the other side, who, tolerant of the errors of our brethren, on a principle of charity, receive in return the citations of courts, the letters of request of Bishops ; the abuse of Charges, and the violence of mobs.

We have reached then here, as I said before, the culminating point of " Church difficulties."

The result is in the hands of God, but the responsibility of the result must lie upon those of our Rulers who will be the means of provoking it. To abandon either the doctrine of the Real Presence at the dictation of lay lawyers to whom the Church has given no authority; or submit our ceremonial usages to a State Court, which knows nothing whatever concerning them, is simply an impossibility. The *doctrine* is that in which we live and breathe and have our spiritual being. The *ceremonials* are our insignia, our standards, and as soon would the ensign who carries his colours, although they are merely signs, lower them in battle before the face of the enemy, as we should alter or abandon a single iota of what the Catholic Church has given into our hands to guard. "The guards die, but they never surrender." The result then must be the severance of what is now our general Church of England communion into its two component parts: the Church part and the State part. Vinegar and oil cannot combine. For three hundred years, by the power of those who have ruled with a rod of iron, as in the Star Chamber, the Courts of High Commission, and the Privy Council as at present constituted, the combination has been forced into an external and apparent

fusion. But the State in admiration of every kind of Free-thinking, has got its hands at present full of Dissenters and Unitarians, and they, making themselves apparent in Westminster Abbey, as well as in Westminster Hall, have rendered this fusion no longer possible. On each side we separate and diverge from the impossible alliance. We cannot go on. It is seen to be better, more wholesome, and more congenial to the two component parts that they should, from henceforward, live in separate vessels.

But I hear some one saying, "You despond, you give no hope, you do not say whither we are to turn in the calamities of the Church despoiled and disestablished, as she will be by the Power of the State.

To which I reply: To despond would be to distrust God's Grace. To fly to any other source of refuge than that Power which is imparted to us by the Apostolic commission of our Blessed Lord, sealed with the gifts of Pentecost, would be a sin against God. We must join with David and the Saints who suffered of old. "*Under the shadow of Thy wings shall be my refuge, until this tyranny be overpast.*" We look the danger in the face manfully, in order that we may choose our side the more readily. We are aware of it, we anticipate

it, and by doing so we shall have the more grace and power to pass through the darkness in patience, and come out into the light victoriously.

I cannot conclude this Preface better than by quoting the almost prophetic words of Dr. Neale himself.

“Why do I talk of these dangers? It is for fear lest, acquiescing in heresy, our Church should sever herself from the blessed company of the faithful; should have no part nor lot in Christ’s Body; should, while she has a name to live, be dead; lest our union in her with Christ our Lord should be snapped asunder; lest the Sacraments which we administer should become profanity, and the means of salvation which we receive be made helps and furtherances to damnation. How *can* it but be full of peril, when such a heresy, as for fifteen hundred years the Church of God never heard of, is imputed, even though by a most unrighteous judgment, to be acquiesced in by our Holy Mother? How can it but be full of peril, when those in her highest stations have agreed to a denial of that Faith, for which so many of their saintly predecessors have suffered spoiling of their goods, and banishment, some even death itself?”

These are the words of a Sermon referring to

the Gorham heresy. But Dr. Neale does not despond, though he describes the difficulty. Neither need we despond, though now, as then, we know the difficulty. On the contrary, he goes on—

“But in this danger.” (He refers to the ship wreck of S. Paul.) “But in this danger what was the hope? That they drew near some country. Skilful men even then discerned some approaching hope. So it may be now. Troubled as we are on every side, there are not wanting signs of deliverance. The Church is forced to claim for herself, now, more than for many a long year she has claimed. Statesmen listen with astonishment to truths which it has not been the fashion for them to hear. Powers that Christ gave, and the world cannot take away; Sacramental channels of the Holy Ghost, which earthly rulers cannot stop; the inherent rights of the Church to frame her own laws, and have a voice in the election of her own chief pastors; victory gained by patient endurance; the triumph of suffering. These are words to which the great men of this world are not accustomed. *‘The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew.’* Satan might sift him as wheat, but Peter’s faith failed not; Councils might anathematize him, and Emperors seek his life, but

Athanasius in his desert shall overcome both. Is this storm, this darkness, any sign that we are lost? Is the chill before sunrise any proof that the sun will not appear? Is it not rather the very symbol of its being at hand?"

You would not forsake the ship, because it was in a danger! You would not throw yourself into the sea out of your own will, to get safe to land! The ship is stuck fast where two seas meet. True. But hear what the Apostle says, "*Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.*"

So Dr. Neale continues—"The type is true of us. We also are falling into a place where two seas meet—the Sea of Heresy and the Sea of Tyrannical Power, and 'deep calleth unto deep to devour us.' What shall we then say to those who choose this time for leaving us? They may go conscientiously, indeed, but will they have no account to render, not only for themselves, but for weakening our hands and discouraging our hearts. . . . We, by God's grace, will struggle in this matter to the very last. God sees that we labour to prevent the dreadful irruption of heresy and schism, which must prevail were the English Church to perish. He knows that we would preserve to Him the many faithful souls, now almost unconsciously feeding in the green

pastures of faith, and lying down by the still waters of His Sacraments. If, after all, the abomination of desolation is to enter into the Holy Place, He, as of old time, will give us a sign. If the Presence of God is to leave our Temple, then, as in ancient days, that terrible voice, '*Let us depart hence,*' will first be heard. But now, we have every true sign of His being with us. The marvellous revival of His Church—the dry bones gathering together and covering with flesh—nay, even the very loathing and horror we feel at the possibility that we should be implicated in denying the Faith.

“No. ‘Though all this be come upon us, yet have we not forsaken Him, nor behaved ourselves frowardly in His covenant. Our heart is not turned back, neither our steps gone out of His way. No, not when He has smitten us into the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of Death.’”*

WM. J. E. BENNETT,
Vicar of Froome-Selwood, Somerset.

August 30, 1871.

* Octave Sermons at S. Barnabas', 1850. Dr. Neale's Sermon: "*The Church's Extremity, our Lord's Opportunity.*"

LECTURES,

ETC.

I.

CHURCH UNIONS.

“Thine heart shall fear and be enlarged.”—*Isaiah* lx. 5.

THE first impression, I think, which every one must derive from the study of the history of the Church is this: how different, how almost contradictory, are the methods which at various times she has adopted to repel heresy, to propagate truth, to renew fervour, to reform discipline. At one period she eagerly avails herself of arms, which at another she deliberately rejects; at one council she enforces the acceptance of a word which, in another, she declines. Here she sacrifices something of her freedom, much of her spring, for an establishment; there she prefers to remain hated or ignored by the kings of this world.

Now she will tolerate heresy in her bosom to an extent that has led too eager spirits to forsake her for a schism—witness Novatian, and Donatus, and Lucifer of Cagliari: anon she will shew herself—to speak as the world—intolerant and overbearing for a phrase, a syllable, a letter; as when she made the Homöusion necessary to salvation, and insisted that our LORD should be declared to be not only *of*, but *in*, two natures. All her operations are irregular; her acts cannot be calculated beforehand. Something she has of the attributes of her Head: “His way is in the sea, and His paths in the great waters, and His footsteps are not known.” Then she seems to be deserting the Catholic Faith, when she is most strongly defending it; then to be wavering, when most decided; then to be on the very eve of defeat, when the future conquest is to be most brilliant.

Shall I remind you of what we should have heard in a city of Asia during the height of the Arian struggle? We should have been listening to a bishop, venerable in appearance, eloquent in language, mighty in the Scriptures,—as from the altar steps of his church he preached to his people on the great controversy of the day. And what would have been his words? That, thoroughly persuaded as he himself was of the divinity of the

HOLY GHOST, he would so far condescend for the present to the infirmities of weaker brethren, as not dogmatically to propound it for an article of the faith. The man blasphemes, you say; he is a heretic. Is it so? That man is none other than one of the saints and doctors of the Church,—one of the pillars of her orthodoxy,—it is S. Basil of Cæsarea. Shall I remind you, too, how the same saint received the heretical and persecuting emperor Valens, if not to communicate, which is doubtful, at least to offer at the altar?

Again, let us for a moment imagine that we had lived in the middle of the sixth century. We should have found the great controversy on the Incarnation not yet settled. We should have seen the Church struggling against the heresy of Monophysites, split indeed into a thousand branches, but united against her. We should have heard her faithful members branded as Chalcedonians, as Synodites, as Melchites. Suddenly, there is a report that the enemies of the Faith have obtained access to the emperor's ear. The rumour goes that certain writings and persons, stigmatised as Nestorian, are to be anathematised in an Eastern Council. The motive, hatred to the fathers of Chalcedon; the means, an Erastian appeal to an intermeddling emperor. Well, we should have

said, the faith of the Church cannot be overthrown; but it is no new thing that emperors and kings should rise up against it. It is not unheard of that the East should fall into schism or heresy. Doubtless, this new Council will be reckoned with Rimini, and Seleucia, and Philippopoli, and others, that in their times, and for a season, have vexed the Church of God. Weeks pass; and still we are confirmed in our belief. All the West joins in remonstrances against the proposed anathema; Africa rises as one man in opposition to it; the Bishop of Rome goes to Constantinople to forbid the step. The synod meets; the Pope refuses to act with it; the Council proceeds without him; the Nestorian chapters are condemned; the emperor's pleasure is done; Vigilius is compelled to apologize; the remonstrances of the West are disregarded. And yet the synod thus brought to pass by a combination of heretical doctrine and imperial authority, thus opposed, thus suspicious in its origin, becomes the fifth Œcumenical Council; and, designed to subvert, it in point of fact most vigorously upholds, the One Faith delivered at Chalcedon.

This irregularity then, this variation in the actions of the Church, is perhaps the most striking feature of its history. But its second—if the

second—characteristic, is the sameness in this difference. Look on one side of the pattern, all is confusion; every leading thread seems at cross purposes: look on the other, all is harmonious, all in combination. Listen, with an untaught ear, to the wonderful music of creeds, councils, doctors, and definitions—it is a succession of discords: listen to it with an intelligent comprehension, and it is resolved into a sublime harmony. Step by step has the Church won her way,—marvellously has she wound between opposing heresies that threatened to destroy her: and now, in the nineteenth century of her existence, she knows no other faith than in the first; though she may have defined it more clearly, though she may have fenced it more ably, though she may even comprehend it more perfectly. But, if this be the case with respect to doctrine, how much more so with reference to discipline? You shall find the Church, at one time, deriving unseen might from the solitary prayers of hermits, scattered in dens and caves: at another, combining those recluses into monasteries, and lavishing all her art on their ritual; at another, sending them out among the people without any settled subsistence; here, dispatching rude and unpolished envoys to the peasant; there, employing all the arts of literature and

cultivation to win the noble. True, her essential discipline is and must be the same. She holds to that golden cord which is linked, through the Apostles, to JESUS CHRIST, though she may have developed and expanded it,—reticulated it in many a graceful knot, enveloped it in many a curious arabesque ; nay, perhaps, in particular cases, overlaid it with something of false ornament.

It is worthy of remark,—and for this purpose I chose my text,—that each fresh development of discipline, each clearer statement of doctrine, has been preceded and accompanied by misgivings and suspicions among many of the true sons of the Church. “Thine heart shall fear and be enlarged.” The price of its enlargement, so to speak, was a season of doubt. And so again : when the prophet calls on the Church to enlarge her borders, how does he preface the command ? “*Fear not* : lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes.” So it has been from the time of the Apostles. Does S. Peter preach the Gospel to the Gentiles ? Immediately it follows : “They that were of the circumcision contended with him.” Does S. Paul assay to join himself to the Twelve ? The brethren are afraid of him. Does S. Jerome introduce the monastic life at Rome ? So loud is the outcry, that he is forced to leave the city. Is

the plan of the great Reformation of the thirteenth century proposed at Rome? It is all but condemned by Innocent III. as above the strength of human nature. Is the reform of the Russian office books undertaken by Nikon? It is resisted violently by the prelates as an innovation on the faith.* Is the Propaganda proposed, as a fit organization for the missionary energies of the Roman Church? Much opposition has to be overcome by authority, much objection to be vanquished by patience, before it can act. Yes; means not only lawful, but proved by the event to be the very means which God had chosen for the spread of the Church, are rejected at first by those who are most earnest for the peace of Jerusalem.

My brethren, you will make the application for yourselves. The very purpose of our meeting this day impresses it upon our minds. The Union in which we are associated is but one in a system of yet undeveloped and most tremendous power. What results may spring from the full organization of England in one holy league for the Church and

* This purification of the Russian office books from innumerable errors, actually gave rise to a sect existing to this day: that of the *Starekovchtcheni*, or *Oldfaithmen*, who employ themselves in their monasteries, of which they have several, in making accurate copies of the unreformed books, and thus preserving and perpetuating their errors.

for the Faith we cannot yet see. All we know is this ; that we have a fearful engine in our hands,—that many, whose opinion we most value, hold back from assisting us in wielding it,—that if it recoils against the Church, the danger will be tremendous ; that, in that case, we shall have brought the jeopardy upon ourselves. I do not wish to close my eyes to the peril of that which we have taken in hand ; I do not wish to forget the bright promise, and the disastrous apostasy, of Wesleyan Methodists. But can we afford to give up the engine ? Can we reconcile it to our consciences, having the means, to let them run to waste ? Samson's strength was not given to him to lie idle. Esther was not raised to the throne without a purpose. The beauty of Judith was not bestowed for her own exaltation. And the marvelous success which has attended our efforts, the strength we know that we possess, are we calmly and quietly to lay it by, without a thought of the account we must render of it hereafter ? No ; rather let us join in the song of the three blessed children : “ O all ye powers of the LORD, bless ye the LORD : praise Him and magnify him for ever.”

We all know it : every general has acted and conquered on the maxim that, in war, success

depends far less on the actual strength of an army, than on the concentrated force that can be brought to bear on any one point. Now, it is precisely this concentration which Unions supply. The parish priest no longer bears the burden and heat of the day alone; he no longer complains that he only has not bowed the knee to the Baal of false doctrine or of Erastianism; he no longer feels himself absolutely powerless in action, absolutely deprived of voice. He catches courage from his brethren:—they in turn kindle their own zeal from him: they gather power and energy as they go; each has his suggestion, each his caution; and thus, in dependence on Him Who will be with His Church alway, even unto the end of the world, they go forth in their holy warfare.

Now, though I know not that any one denies the power of such a combination, yet many regard it with doubt, with jealousy, with uneasiness, and cannot, to use their own expression, see their way clear to join it. Let us examine the reasons we more commonly hear alleged by those of whom I speak. There are, I think, three, on which the greatest stress is usually laid. The first, that unions are bodies without Episcopal sanction (for the most part) or co-operation. The second, that their whole organization and method of action is irre-

gular. The third, that they employ a weapon which should be left to the world, namely, agitation; and which is highly unbecoming those who preach the Gospel of Peace. The first of these will give us ample subject of consideration this morning; to the others we may find some other occasion to advert.

The first objection, then, is this. Here, they say, you profess to be a Church body, doing Church work, and in the Church's way. Where, then, are your Bishops? Is it not notorious that by some you are openly denounced, by more viewed with scarcely concealed dislike, by more still barely tolerated? And is it come to this, that priests and laymen constitute themselves into a society, such as from the beginning of Christianity was never heard of, condemn this doctrine, maintain that, issue manifestos, frame declarations, do everything, in short, that a Bishop ought to do, and yet have no Bishop's approval for their deeds? "Who hath required this at your hands?" "Ye take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi." Where are the sayings of the early Fathers, once so perpetually paraded? "Do nothing without the Bishop." "Follow the Bishop, as JESUS CHRIST the FATHER." Have you so soon forsaken your

principles? or is yours a doctrine to be used against an enemy, and to be prudently dismissed for the sake of serving a friend?

This, and more, we hear: and it well deserves consideration. If it were true that our principles are the convenient things, alternately to be trumpeted and hushed up, to be flourished and sheathed, we should richly deserve the appellation of hypocrites. If, again, we have changed them to meet an emergency, I see not how we can disclaim the character of timeservers. But we do, and we are, neither one nor the other.

Let us for a moment consider in what state the movement of 1833 found the Church. Deep sleep had fallen upon her dignitaries. Appointed for political ends, selected as the most moderate of the moderate, aristocratical in their ideas, luxurious in their habits,—they delivered their triennial charges, they presided at their triennial dinners, they were hospitable in a way, charitable after a sort,—the very type and model of what presents itself to the English mind as respectable. They knew that they were Lords of Parliament,*

* A curious example of the popular view distinguishing the claims of the English Church, not only from those of Rome, but from those also of the Scotch Establishment, is given by one who, as far as his knowledge went, wished her well,—Sir Walter Scott. "You are not," says Charles, to an English

but they had almost forgotten that they were successors of the Apostles:—they were well aware that their votes must be forthcoming in a political struggle, but they scarcely seemed to remember that they were to contend earnestly for the faith. On a sudden, they, in the seclusion of their palaces, saw the outburst of the movement. They found themselves extolled as the successors of the Apostles, guardians of the Faith, angels of the Church, CHRIST's vicegerents upon Earth. Without reference to them, nothing was to be commenced. The Fathers and Saints of old spoke to their prerogatives;—God had given them; and woe be to the man that should attempt to take them away!

If to us, who have the experience of seventeen years since, there appears something unreal in the application of the words of primitive Saints to English Bishops, we scarcely realize the state of things at the time of which I speak. A sceptic would laugh,—and we might weep, if we think of what has since happened,—when we read, in an early *Tract for the Times*, that we could wish no

clergyman, “I apprehend, either a Catholic priest or a Scotch Mass-John, to claim devoted obedience from your hearers; but a Church-of-England-man, subject to the laws of that Communion, and to its Head.”

more blessed lot for English prelates, that they would desire no higher honour, than spoiling of their goods or martyrdom. But who, then, could tell whether, bad as the appointment of those prelates was, they might not rise and take the lead in the movement? whether they might not atone for past indifference by subsequent energy? whether, under all the disadvantages of dioceses, vast beyond the power of man to administer, they might not spend and be spent in their labours, and cry mightily for coadjutors? Such things had before been. S. Ambrose, raised by the mere ebullition of popular feeling,—S. Thomas, elevated as the minion of a tyrannical monarch,—had laboured and died for the Church. S. Ambroses and S. Thomases might be amongst us now. If we did our duty, they would do theirs.

Need I remind you to what extent these anticipations were fulfilled? Need I point to the surplice question, puerile in itself, but, as involving a principle of vital importance; the progress of ecclesiology, and, as connected with that, the judgment on the stone altar; the battle on the vacancy of the see of Hereford; the struggle against a godless education? Need I ask you, whether, as a body, the Bishops stepped forward in defence of the truth?

And then came the appeal for heresy to the Privy Council. The two primates denied the faith. One bishop boldly opposed the flood of ungodliness; and two others, the first cautiously, the second unhesitatingly, followed him. The Episcopal Council met. One of the foundations of the faith had been assailed. They were adjured, by the God of truth, to speak out; they were prayed, by the God of love, to have some pity on those whom their pusillanimity was driving from the Church; they were supplicated by the God from Whom all faith comes, to make some declaration of their own faith on the denied article in the Nicene Creed. And the result reminds us of the prayers and adjurations of those who, in old times, with their religion at stake, cried for help from morning till the evening sacrifice. "There was no voice, nor any that answered." We hung, as for life, on the issue of the episcopal deliberation; and to all our agony of expectation, silence was the only reply. Baptised infants might be children of God, or children of the Devil; the HOLY GHOST might be given to them in baptism, or He might not be given; regeneration at the font might be God's revelation, or a soul-destroying doctrine; we might settle it as we liked, or not settle it at all,—the bishops, as a body, had no opinion on the matter.

At last, however, their deliberations ended in a new court of appeal. The discussion came on in that House of Parliament which is best disposed to the Church. The primate evinced the degree of interest which he felt in the matter by his absence ; and the measure was contemptuously rejected.

But is not the case the same in the private, as in the public struggles of the truth ? Does a priest at a visitation sermon preach the rankest heresy, nay, Deism ? The bishop shall propose his health, as if an objective creed were an Utopian delusion. Does one of his brethren vindicate the faith, by the only means left to him—an after-dinner speech ? The bishop regrets the exhibition of such differences between those whose profession is love. Does the parish curate refuse Christian burial to a Mormonite, or some other notorious blasphemer ? The bishop is extremely sorry for the state of the laws ; but hints that, in the present position of affairs, the point had better be conceded. Is a gaol chaplain dismissed, by a bench of magistrates, from house and home, because he refuses to violate the Seal of Confession ? The bishop cannot, on any account, interfere. But let it be a matter towards which the religious public is favourably disposed ; a meeting for the Sunday closing of the Post-office, a sermon for the Church Missionary

Society, a protest against the new Roman hierarchy, nay, even a committee for carrying out the Great Exhibition—and who so active, who so energetic, as the bishop of the diocese?

Does not the personal knowledge of each of you, my reverend brethren, tell you that I am not exaggerating, but much understating, the truth? Is it not the commonest every-day answer, when a point of doctrine has been brought before a bishop, and the result is asked: “Of course he said nothing;” or, “Of course he would turn off the matter;” or, “Oh, he would not, you know, like to speak decidedly;” or, “What should he do, but hush up the quarrel?” And this on dogmatic points of faith, for which men *have* had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings: yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonments; have been stoned, sawn asunder, tempted, slain with the sword; have wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, of whom the world was not worthy. Oh, if there could be such a thing as scorn in the country of which those blessed ones have so long been counted worthy, with what contempt, think you, would they look on the tricks and subterfuges, the roundings off and smoothings down, the cautions and counter-cautions, the loopholes and safety-valves,

the crying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace, which characterizes the reply of an English prelate of the nineteenth century to a question of faith ! What would holy Alexander, at whose prayers Arius was taken from the world ; or those bold Egyptian priests, who healed a cripple “in the name of JESUS CHRIST, Whom Lucius persecuteth ;” or valiant Ambrose, that withstood Theodosius in the narthex of the basilica at Milan ; or Martin of Rome, tortured to death for an abstract point of faith : what would blessed Athanasius, single against an Arian world ; or aged Flavian, that expired under the bludgeons of ruffian monks at Ephesus ; or heavenly Anselm, alone found resolute to oppose a tyrant ; or great S. Thomas, that died for our metropolitical Church :—what would each and all of these deem of the cowardice, the tergiversations, the compromises, of those who, equally with themselves, have Apostolic consecration and Apostolic grace ! What would S. Ignatius exclaim, could he have heard the primate of England, when approaching, in a charge to his clergy, the great heresy of the time, declare that, the subject being under the consideration of the Privy Council, it would be obviously improper for him to enter on its discussion ! What would those famous confessors, who suffered all things rather

than admit the Henoticon, the Ecthesis, or the Type, think of a Metropolitan, who would take no steps to deprive a convicted heretic of the cure of souls, because, according to civil law, legally inducted to it? What would those great missionaries of other times, S. Boniface, S. Methodius, S. Frumentius, deem, when an Indian Bishop professes his inability to ordain native priests, because his patent only gives him authority over Englishmen?*

And will any one yet have the boldness to say, that the fervent words, applied by S. Ignatius to those primitive bishops, are true of our own? Ours, I allow, have had their prototypes. The answers of the present primate to all remonstrances on the baptismal heresy, are conceived in the very spirit of that famous letter which Eusebius of Nicomedia,† in the name of Constantius, addressed

* "Bishop Middleton conceived that his letters patent, properly interpreted, gave him no authority to ordain natives of India: this was the view taken by some influential persons at home; . . . he never felt at liberty to change his opinion during the seven years and a half of his episcopate." —Pratt's Life, p. 98.

† The circumstances of the life of Eusebius are, in many ways, instructive. In his heart embracing the heresy of Arius, but wanting courage to assert it with his lips; setting inferiors to make statements which he dared not to put forward himself, and rewarding them for so doing: yet professing to believe with the Catholic Church, and dying in outward communion

to S. Alexander and to Arius. Liberius, in his lamentable fall, lacks not his imitators in the present day. But it was with no Ignatian reverence that he was then addressed. The *Iterum iterumque anathema tibi, prævaricator Liberi*, tells a different tale. Perhaps, however, the most curious prototype of English Bishops is to be found in the concordat of the Armenian Council of Ani, summoned on the question of union with the Eastern Church. "If any one think the faith of Chalcedon contrary to the traditions of the Apostles"—only in our times it would be "to Scripture"—"and rejects it not himself, he himself is to be rejected; but if any believes it to be agreeable to the three first Councils, and yet anathematizes, let himself be anathema."

Let us be honest to ourselves, and to our Bishops. Let us be deeply thankful that, for their moral character, we need fear a comparison with no Church under the sun. But to call their vacillation prudence, their indifference impartiality, their timidity caution, their weakness wisdom, is to deceive ourselves; and, so far as in us lies, to deceive them also. God forbid that we should

with Catholic bishops: translated, in extreme old age, to the highest see in the East; indebted for all his promotions to the State, confirming the emperors in their errors, and rewarded by them for his own.

speaking evil of dignities ! But, attacked ourselves for acting without them, we are bound to give the reasons that induce us thus to come forward ; and to do so by a plain statement of facts, seems at once the most simple and the most righteous course.

If it be true, then,—and who will dare to deny it ?—that within the last twelve years the most vital doctrines of the Church have been openly gainsaid by men in the Church,—that the Bishops, *as a body*, have done nothing in her defence,—that by far the majority of individual Prelates have either temporised, or defended heresy,—that some, including the Primates, have avowed it,—is it not an insult upon reason to apply to us the Ignatian doctrines, *Do nothing without the Bishop ?* Is it not equivalent to saying, *Do nothing at all ?*

But again : even had our Bishops the will, have they the physical power of doing what must be done ? If a saint sat in every English see, would not the old primitive rule be now impossible ? Let me explain what I mean.

The essential office of a Bishop must always remain the same. As CHRIST'S vicegerent in his own diocese, all mission must come from him. By his commission his priests absolve and consecrate ; by his commission they baptize, they

preach, they pronounce the nuptial benediction, they catechize, they instruct. And, in the primitive ages, they were so completely his ministers, that, he being present, a priest would not act. If, even then, he was not the sole minister of the Sacraments in his diocese, he was at least their ordinary minister. "The right of conferring baptism," says Tertullian, "is in the Chief Priest, that is, the Bishop; then in priests and deacons; yet not without the authority of the Bishop, on account of the laws of the Church."* And so S. Jerome, writing against the Luciferians: "Without the command of the Bishop, neither priest nor deacon have the right of baptizing." And so S. Paulinus tells us of S. Ambrose that, so strenuous was he in the discharge of his duties, scarcely five Bishops could perform the number of baptisms which he himself undertook. Nay, learned men have conceived that a trace of this primitive custom may be found even as late as the times of Honorius of Rheims. He, rebuking the layman Odoacer† for his sacrilegious invasion of the church of Beauvais, asks how many had been left without canonical baptisms? *A fortiori*, if the Bishop were the ordinary minister of baptism, he was so

* De Baptismo. cap. 17. † Epistol. 52, § 2.

of the Holy Eucharist, and of confession. And the remark of Nicephorus the Chartophylax, repeated by Schelstrate, is very much to the purpose : that in those primitive times, when the harvest was great, and the labourers few, one Bishop was sufficient in most places, who, as a true pastor, should exercise all the offices of a pastor. Whence the canons and writings of the Fathers that forbid the doing anything without the Bishop are to be understood also of these offices. But by degrees, as dioceses became more extended, while the Bishop was still the source of mission, he was no longer the ordinary minister of that for which he gave mission. Into this place the priests stepped. In the East, as we all know, they proceeded even further than in the West, and were the ordinary ministers of confirmation as well as of baptism.

The change has its exact parallel in civil matters. Theoretically, all authority comes from the monarch. The judges administer justice by his commission : he judges, in other words, by their mouths. In earlier times, they were so far his mere representatives, that, he being present, they either acted not at all, or as his assessors. The Court of King's Bench, by its very title, implies the presence of the monarch ; but were the sovereign now to assume the office of judge, it would

be as monstrous an invasion of right, as though a Bishop were to pretend to undertake the ordinary administration of all Sacraments throughout his diocese.

If we carry the same considerations into doctrine, we shall find that, in primitive times, the Bishop decided it for his diocese. Its controversies were settled by him; its offices, its Liturgy, its very Creed, depended on him. These privileges were by degrees abridged. The Creed first, and then the Liturgy, and then the offices, were soon established, by an authority superior to that of any individual Bishop. His sentence was checked by the liberty of appeal, through Metropolitans and Exarchal, up to Œcumenical Councils,—the ultimate and infallible judges.

And now, is it reasonable to exact from us primitive deference to bishops, the extent of whose dioceses and the multiplicity of whose occupations are so entirely unprimitive?

Let us draw a parallel. Asia Minor has an area less than that of England and Ireland put together. The former, in the fifth or sixth centuries, possessed twenty-two metropolitans and about five hundred bishops; the latter has, in the eighteenth, four metropolitans, and about forty bishops. Taking into consideration the difference

of population, we may say that the metropolitan of those days is the bishop of these : the bishop of those the rural dean of these. Let us take a more minute example. The province of Lycia is considerably smaller than the county of Sussex. Lycia had a metropolitan and forty bishops ; Sussex has a bishop and eighteen rural deans. In the former, eight or ten miles must have been the radius of the largest diocese ; in the latter (and that by no means an extreme case) the prelate might travel eighty miles in a straight line, and not pass the bounds of his bishopric. And to the same effect those canons, like the 57th of Laodicea, and the sixth of Sardica, may be quoted, which forbid the erection of sees in villages and small towns. It seems as if there were no fear lest the dioceses would be too large, but that there *was* considerable fear lest,—after the example of the Montanists and Donatists,—that should be done, to quote the words of S. Leo, which the divinely inspired decrees of the fathers had forbidden, and, as Matthew Blastares observes, the name and authority of a bishop be lightly regarded. This, then, is a point of the utmost consequence to our present inquiry. The English bishop of the present day has nothing in this respect, but his essential power, in common with the primitive prelate.

And how much more true does this appear, when we take into consideration the difference between the primitive election, and the present nomination of bishops ! Not that I can even refer now to that vast subject : further than to remind you, that canons passed when it was probable that the bishop elect would be the best and holiest of the priests of the diocese, can scarcely apply to times when it is absolutely certain that he will not be so.

And thus much I was desirous of saying with reference to the first and most usual objection against unions : the absence of episcopal sanction. To those who exclaim, Do nothing without the bishop, I reply, that they themselves necessarily and rightly violate the primitive rule *in its primitive signification*. What authority have they to affix a meaning of their own to the words (for it is completely a meaning of their own), and then condemn us as running contrary to the voice of councils and the teaching of Bishops ? Primitive dioceses and primitive elections first : and then it will be time to act according to all the strictness of the Ignatian rule.

The other objection against Unions I reserve for some other time. In the meanwhile let us not only unite in action, but in prayer, and in the great

sacrifice, that God would arise and have mercy upon Sion, for it is time that He have mercy upon her : yea, the time is come. For why ? His servants think upon her stones, and it pitieth them to see her in the dust.

II.

CHURCH UNIONS.

“Thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged.”—*Isaiah* lx. 5.

WE had occasion to dwell, the last time we met, on the irregularity which has always distinguished the most energetic, and the, eventually, most successful actions of the Church. And, indeed, if we consider the matter aright, this is only what the very nature of the case would lead us to expect. If we believe in the ever present inspiration of the HOLY GHOST throughout the whole of that body of which CHRIST is the Head, we should expect that the action of the Church would be anything but monotonous. Assailed by new dangers, she would be supplied with new arms;—and all novelty is, in its degree, irregularity. And again; infallible and invincible, she would not be over-anxious lest the next step should be a wrong one. She cannot err whom God leads.

Indeed, a machine-like action is ill fitted for a living, is incompatible with a healthy, body. If

we see a man living by rule, eating the same food, taking the same exercise, retiring to rest at the same time every day, and learn that he is excessively on his guard against any infringement of the laws he has proposed to himself,—should we call such a man a model of health, or should we not rather regard him as a confirmed invalid? But if we see that a man adapts himself to the circumstances in which he is placed; takes more food when he is called to severer exercise, dispenses, when it is requisite, with some portion of sleep, and all this without limiting himself as to the exact proportion of his labour, or the exact nature of his diet; then we call such an one a strong man.

Thus it is with the Church. A mechanical existence is the very last which it is her nature to lead. And how could it be otherwise? Her great enemy, who never slumbers, never rests,—he is no piece of mechanism. His devices and stratagems are, so to speak, of the most original character. While the Church is giving him battle, her adversary is gone. She seeks him, but his place can nowhere be found. When lo! he is assailing her on the very opposite quarter: and she has need of all her rapidity of action, of all her—I had almost said—versatility, to meet him

with success. And in such cases she more especially shews it. If his assaults are, as I said, original; her defence, inspired by the SPIRIT of Wisdom, is pre-eminently so. In the thing wherein he boasted, she is above him.

This is the characteristic of the Church Catholic. And, to a certain degree, it is so of each particular Church. There cannot, indeed, in national communions, be the same freedom of action. They are but parts of a system, and cannot use methods of exertion inconsistent with the general movement of the whole. But, so far as individual liberty, and individual irregularity, are consistent with the laws of general progress, there they are used to the utmost. For example: is Spain overwhelmed with Arianism? The Church introduces the novelty of single instead of trine immersion, the more strongly to set forth the verity that These Three are One. Is Bulgaria, under very peculiar circumstances, brought into the fold of the Church? A then barbarous language is, contrary to all precedent, made the vehicle of its liturgy. Are the African Bishops negligent in labouring among the heathen? An African Council so far infringes on diocesan rights as to render it lawful for one prelate, in this case, to interfere in the territory of another. Is the translation of a Bishop from one

see to another a crying evil? The West, assembled in Council, proceeds to the length of depriving any one so offending of even the viaticum. Are Christians taunted by the heathen with effeminacy and cowardliness in battle? A French Synod actually excommunicates those who throw away their arms in fight.

These may serve as examples of irregularity among provincial Councils. I am not called on to deny that sometimes, in national Synods,—and I speak now particularly of those of Spain,—this principle may have been carried too far. But I say that, in itself, it is a sign of healthy action; and, even when most extravagant, it has been overruled to good.

Now it is precisely here that the English Church has failed almost from the era of its reformation. It has been living, so to speak, on stilts. This must not be done by a priest, because it is not respectable; and this, because it has a singular look; and this, because people will stare; and that, because it is enthusiastic. How often, for instance, do we hear of sober devotion, rational piety, safeguards against fanaticism and excess! God be praised, if the Evangelical movement did nothing else, it in some degree dispersed this sickly, hothouse notion of respectability and order.

Yes, we have begun, and only begun, to learn that what at first seems most disorderly, may, in fact, have in itself the elements of the greatest order. Why, I cannot cast my eyes around this church without learning the same lesson. I look on its variegated floor, so diverse, and yet so beautiful. Can confusion be more entire, than that of each separate row? Colours, patterns, shapes, mixed, it seems, at absolute random. I take its fellow row, and compare the two; and I see that there is some design, for I may not yet call it order. I take another and another, and the arrangement opens upon me: what seemed confusion is subordination; the irregularity of the parts is the oneliness of the whole. And what is this but to revert to the prophetic declaration,—the stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head stone of the corner? Have we not here another remarkable likeness between the natural body, and that spiritual body, the Church? Poison, subtle, deadly poison is lurking in the system. Does the heart continue to beat, and the lungs to play, with their ordinary calmness? Not so. Nature, as we speak, exerts herself to the utmost to cast out the venom. She excites the system; she accelerates its action; and the man is in a fever. But the fever itself is no disease. Treat

it so, and you miserably fail. But assist nature in her struggle, and by God's grace, you may hope to succeed.

Thus, in the Church, irregularity of action is, I do not deny, the symbol of disease. There is something wrong somewhere when it occurs. But suppress it, and who may tell the consequences? The fever of controversy, and irritations, and clamour, is better than the cold of death.

But there are so-called physicians, ready with their universal remedy for the Church. They never trouble themselves to see where the sore lies. Only keep still—only be at external peace—only be sure that, when you say opposite things, you mean precisely the same—only let truth be neither mine nor thine, but divide it, and you have the panacea. Wise physicians, that check healthy action, and think they are destroying the disease! Wise masons, that stop the cracks with mortar, and think they have propped the wall! Wise purifiers, who chalk over a foul spot and pronounce it free from pollution.

My brethren, if at this time, and in this Church, action were perfectly regular—if operations were carried on with the cold monotony which characterised the Church of England in the last century, when she seemed sleeping herself to death—then,

indeed, I do think that the case would seem desperate. But irrepressible energy, finding no vent, will make one. It is a very different question whether forms and laws ought not to be given to these efforts by those who are highest in the Church. But, as from them we may have no such expectations, it is better to struggle, and, if it be God's will, to conquer, in an irregular manner, than to act according to precedent, and perish.

But we constantly hear it said; "There is indeed cause for all possible exertion—there is both scope and call for the most extraordinary struggles; the Church needs them, and will perish without them; but they are not of the kind of which you speak. The servant of the LORD must not strive. The Church must not use the arms of the world. We are not going about to influence an election. We are not carrying on an Anti-Corn-Law League. It is by more earnest prayer, by more diligent ministrations to his people, that the parish priest is called to do his part in the work: not by promoting public agitation, not by leaving his cure to take part in stormy meetings at a distance. Let such things be left to those whose business they are."

Plausible expressions, my brethren, and false as plausible. It is as though, when the vessel was in danger of sinking, the passengers, instead of

giving their united help on deck, were each engaged in arranging and ornamenting his separate berth. Surely a very necessary thing to be done in its due season ; but without the slightest power, at that moment, to assist in the preservation of the vessel. What avails it that a Priest should expound and enforce the Catholic Faith among his people, if, in the meantime, it is being sent away from the Church ? What advantage external forms, daily services, increased communions, if the HOLY GHOST be no longer among us ? God forbid that I should even for a moment seem to undervalue the wonderful might of prayer ! That it will be, after all, which turns back the battle ; and they who can give nothing but that may be the chief agents in the victory. But we *can* give more. We are surely called on to come forth into the midst of this great contest. What should we say to officers who, in the day of battle, were found on their knees instead of at their posts ? What should we say to sailors who, in the height of the storm, were crying to God for that help in which themselves would take no part ? “ Wherefore criest thou unto Me ? Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward.” It is not that I would have you pray less, but work more. It is not that I would have you relax your exertions

in your parish, but that you cannot more fearfully, more irreparably, neglect the souls of your charge than by allowing the source whence your own authority is derived to be poisoned with heresy. Believe me, you will not only be doing the work of a Priest, but of a parish Priest, by contending earnestly for the truth here. Believe me, you will not only be unfaithful Priests, but neglectful parish Priests, if, shutting yourselves up in your own cures, you lend no help to the great work of God that is going on around you.

But, say they, these efforts should be left to those whose business they are. And who *is* that? Are we to be sent to the Bishops? What they will do we have seen. To the Laity, then? And is it come to this, that we, the Priests of the Church, are to turn over her defence to those whom it is our place to lead? It is difficult enough, as we all know, to get them to co-operate with us. "You have my best wishes and prayers," says the tradesman, "but I do not see that I could give much efficient assistance; and I should only ruin myself. *That* I would not care for"—oh, the deceitfulness of man's heart!—"but I should not thereby advantage you." "Really," says the Member of Parliament, "this is a great and a good work; and no man can be more anxious than I am

for its success. But I owe a duty to my constituents as well as to myself. You must remember that I am a citizen as well as a churchman. These views, you know, are anything but popular; and if I endanger my next return, I throw away my best means of assisting you." "I can assure you," says the nobleman, "that, in my proper place, no one will work more zealously for you; but if I appear in our House as a party-man, I shall lose what influence I might otherwise have." To a Laity thus replying to our entreaties that they would help us, are we to leave the whole brunt of the Church's battle?

But now let us boldly look these allegations in the face. The Church must not avail herself of the arms of the world. The Church must not employ agitation.

Now, is it not a fact that, from the very commencement of her history, the Church has, in a certain sense, availed herself of the arms of this world? Did she not, for example, at the first, adapt her ecclesiastical from the civil machinery? Did she not station her chief pastors where the State had placed its chief governors? Did she not partition her territory according to the territorial divisions of the Empire? Nay, more remarkably still, when a civil subdivision of ■

province took place, do we not generally find two ecclesiastical metropolises also? If there were any place which, *à priori*, we might have expected to find invested with ecclesiastical pre-eminence, surely it was Jerusalem. And yet, for more than three centuries, Jerusalem was a mere suffragan of the civil metropolis, Cæsarea. This is an example of what we may call, using the word in a good sense, secular arrangement—of fighting the world with its own weapons—of concentrating spiritual strength where there existed a concentration of civil power. Let Antioch, Ephesus, Alexandria, Nicomedia, Constantinople—nay, even Rome itself—be a witness to how great a length this system was carried.

So, again, in her titles, the Church largely borrowed from the world. In the ordinary appellations of spiritual things and persons, indeed, she could not; though even here the *summus sacerdos* and the *Pontifex Maximus* were for some time freely borrowed; but in the temporal accidents of spiritual things, these secular names were freely bestowed, and without difficulty accepted. Dioceses, Provinces, Exarchies, may serve as examples. Thus, also, the basilica of the Church borrowed both name and features from that of the Empire; and I might endlessly multiply examples.

Next :—to those who call agitation a forbidden weapon, I would ask if it has not always been most powerfully employed by the Church, in opposition to rising or flourishing heresies? Let me draw your attention to one instance in particular, because it presents a curious parallel with present circumstances.

When Nestorius first propagated his heresy at Constantinople, the Court being, negatively at least, on his side, did the clergy content themselves with more sedulously labouring among their flocks, and leave the defence of the faith to those whose business it might be? Look at the facts. Nestorius first committed himself to the new doctrine on Christmas-day. There was a brief pause of indignant astonishment. But a clever lawyer, Eusebius, of Dorylæum, went to work, and in three weeks time produced a pamphlet in opposition to the nascent heresy; and, a week later, another layman, Marius Mercator, put forth a second, containing a yet fuller exposure of its tendency. These tracts made a great sensation. Still the Bishops did not stir. On this the clergy, far from considering their priestly character injured by “agitation,” organised it systematically. Those of S. Irene-next-the-Sea came more especially forward, and were suspended for their pains.

Public meetings were held,—though, as in our own late troubles, the season was Lent. S. Proclus (who, though a Bishop, had no See, and merely acted as a Priest of the Great Church) publicly attacked Nestorianism in a sermon on Lady-day, which fell—as it did in our own conflict—in Holy Week. Nestorius replied. Public indignation ran very high, and was fomented by the Priests and Monks. S. Cyril (and in our own case he had his counterpart), having previously exhorted them to stand fast in the faith, addressed his first *Letter to the Archbishop of Constantinople*. He was publicly answered by one Photius, a city Priest: (we also have our Photius). The orthodox Priests and Monks used every species of agitation. Forming a committee with some of the nobility, they sent addresses to S. Cyril—they memorialised the Emperor—they appealed to Rome. Some of the “clerical agitators” were scourged; still the movement spread. The clergy insisted on a Council, and its issue at Ephesus we all know.

This is a notorious and striking example, and the most casual glance at Church history will furnish many more. Look, for example, at the conduct of the Priests and Deacons of Alexandria and the Mareotis, when the imperial commission

was collecting charges against S. Athanasius: their meetings, protests and appeals. Look at the proceedings of S. Maximus and the clergy of Constantinople in resisting the Ecthesis and the Type, an agitation which resulted in the death of the former, and the triumph of the faith, at the sixth œcumenical Council.

Indeed, the texts of Scripture which we so constantly hear alleged against agitators, manifestly, if they have any bearing on the subject, prove too much. "My kingdom is not of this world." "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal." If, by these passages, we are forbidden to employ any worldly armour, manifestly learning, argument, logic, are carnal weapons. Fanatics there have been who have taught this; and they only carried out the principle consistently. But if we may endeavour to destroy heresy by a printed essay, why not by a spoken address? if by a book, why not on the platform? If parish Priests do not neglect their flocks by composing a work, why do they by attending a committee? Danger, of course, there is, lest this abnormal state should become the every-day life—lest a harsh necessity should degenerate into a pleasurable excitement. But is there not danger in all duty? And is there more in this than elsewhere?

Let us proceed, then, by God's grace, as by God's grace we commenced, through evil report and good report, towards the promotion of His kingdom. Through wars to peace; through storms to calm; through disquiet to rest. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal; that is, they are borne in no worldly spirit; they aim at no worldly good; they are wielded in God's strength, and not in our own. He grant that they may be mighty through His grace, to pulling down strongholds; to cast down every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God; to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of CHRIST; having, also, in a readiness to revenge all disobedience.

And now to GOD the FATHER, GOD the SON, and GOD the HOLY GHOST, be all honour and glory for ever. Amen.

III.

THE PROVIDENTIAL DIRECTION OF THE
MOVEMENT OF 1833 NOT TOWARDS
ROME.

"This is not the way, neither is this the city."—2 *Kings* vi. 19.

ONE of the ablest controversialists of the present day, once the son, now, alas! the bitter enemy of our Church, has lately, as we all probably know, been assaulting her with his keenest weapons. Called on to explain the fact that, during the last seventeen years, she has been inspired with a life and energy that she never before knew, he found it necessary to account, on his own principles, for that marvellous revival in which he was once a leader. He does so by attempting to show that the tendency of the movement of 1833 was not towards the National Church, nor to a party in it, nor to a sect from it, nor to a branch, or Free Church. Hence he prophesies, that it must either end in Rome, or be swallowed up in Protestantism, and so finally be

lost in Infidelity. And the practical conclusion is, that he would have us hence deduce his own result, and follow his own example.

I cannot tell with what force this negative line of argument may strike others ; but whatever conviction it may carry, it seems to me the most dangerous which a Roman controversialist could use, because it is capable of being turned with double force against himself. If from apparent tendency we are to judge of Providential direction, (and as he has set me the example, I shall not shrink from following it,) then, to whatever the great movement has tended, or is tending, whether to the National Church, Party, Sect, or Branch, one thing about it is clear, that it is not to Rome : nay, more, that it is in a remarkable degree opposed to Rome. And I shall endeavour, at the present time, to follow out the considerations of this characteristic.

But here, at the outset, I feel how inferior are the weapons with which I must contend when compared with those which he, to whom I have been referring, thought proper to employ. All that is most telling in his argument is, and I thank God for it, beyond my reach. All that is most piquant in his illustrations I should blush to use. I am not about to betray to her enemies

a knowledge of my mother's weakness acquired in her service. I am not about to expose to a hostile camp secrets intrusted to me by the leaders on whose side I have fought. I shall not carry to the sick man's enemy that knowledge of his case and symptoms which I gained in the confidence of a physician. I shall not make over to the claimer of an estate the flaws which I may seem to have discovered in the title-deeds intrusted to me by the possessor. I have not built up arguments in former years of which I may now select the weakest for ridicule. And yet, oh, my brethren, if even in the judgment of the world, if according to the merest rules of earthly honour, the spy is barely tolerated, while the tale-bearing physician and perfidious lawyer are chased from society: can we believe that a great and holy cause can be advantaged by conduct so nearly akin to theirs? Surely, whatever be the intellectual force of the volume in question, the moral argument deducible from the mere fact of its existence is conclusive against it.

Let us now proceed to our immediate subject; and let us look a little more closely at the mustard-seed of 1833, which even already has increased to so great a tree. None can deny the then lamentable ignorance of the clergy on certain points now

distinctively known as Catholic doctrines. And perhaps it will not be amiss to pause for one moment, that we may consider the sense and propriety of this term before we proceed.

While the Catholic Faith is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, the doctrines which, at one period of the Church, were distinctively Catholic, will, at another time, have no especial claim to that designation. Catholic doctrines are the truths which, for the time being, the world is chiefly bent to attack. Thus the Catholic doctrine of the three first centuries was the Unity of God; that of the fourth, the Divinity of our Lord; that of the fifth, on the one hand, the True Faith touching the Incarnation, on the other, the Sovereignty of Divine Grace. So, that of the eighth was the use of commemorative signs; of the eleventh, the truths assailed by the creeping secret Manichæism of Albigenses, Turlupins, Bogomili, Goodmen, and the like; of the sixteenth, the necessity of good works to salvation; and now of the nineteenth, the point of attack and defence is the Catholic Faith concerning the Sacraments.

I may quote a passage from the Athanasian Creed as illustrating my meaning. There we read: "Like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every Person by Himself to

be GOD and LORD ; So are we forbidden by the Catholic religion to say, There be three Gods or three Lords." Now, at the present time, had this creed been to draw up, undoubtedly we should have reversed the antithesis, and have affirmed that, like as we are compelled by the Catholic religion to acknowledge the TRINITY, so are we forbidden by the Christian verity to divide the Unity. But at the period when the Athanasian creed was composed, the Unity was still the doctrine for which the Church had most strenuously to fight, notwithstanding all the heresies that had sprung up in her bosom ; and this, by the way, is a good argument for the very early origin of that Confession of Faith.

With the Catholic doctrine of the nineteenth century, the Sacramentality of the faith, so fearfully obscured in the Church of England, the present wonderful movement began. And if any one will look into the writings of its earliest leaders, he will see how gradually light dawned on their minds. Of one thing they were certain, that the English Church was right, and that Rome, if not anti-christian, was at least deeply plunged in gross heresy and idolatry. Holding to this belief, they pursued their way towards truth. One doctrine cleared upon them, one difficulty vanished before them, after another ; and

they emerged from the damp and darkness through which they had toiled, into a brighter and a purer atmosphere.

Let us now suppose that, instead of ordering this slow and gradual progress, it had pleased God, as in the like cases it often has pleased Him, that the fuller light should at once burst in upon them. Let us suppose them, at the very commencement of the movement, to have become at once and thoroughly convinced that the Holy Eucharist is a true and proper sacrifice for quick and dead ; that auricular confession is, in almost all cases, highly expedient,—in many, all but necessary ; that the disuse of prayers for the departed is a woeful corruption of primitive doctrine ; let us imagine them to have at once received those views concerning the Reformation, its principles, motives, and actors, which we, my brethren, hold now ; what, humanly speaking, would have been the consequence ? Undoubtedly they would have sought in Rome what they never would have hoped to obtain (but what, in some degree, even already, we have obtained) in our Church.

For what might have befallen them did, in many instances, befall others. If any man will look at the list of our divines in the latter half of the seventeenth century, he will be surprised to find

how many of them, individual by individual, dropped off to Rome. They saw the corruption around them—their eyes were perhaps opened to it suddenly—or, perchance, their hearts were not endued with that loving patience which hopeth all things. In short, the LORD's time was not come that the dead bones should live.

But from this conclusion to their inquiries after truth, God preserved the leaders of the present movement. Drawn gradually forward themselves, they drew others gradually after them; and nine years elapsed before any Priest separated himself from them, and deemed it necessary to his salvation to seek refuge in Rome.

In some respects, there is herein a remarkable similarity between our own and the non-juring movement. It is true that the two differed, especially in this; the tendency of the one was to a branch Church, or rather a schism; the tendency of the other was not; but they agreed in one point—that the tendency of neither was to Rome. Of the non-jurors it is well known that, miserably split as they were among themselves, and with their lot cast in the very worst age of our Church, while many returned to us, while many turned their eyes to the East, not one died in the communion of Rome.

And if the tendency of our own movement were, in its commencement, not towards Rome, is it not yet more clear that its working, in its further progress, has been yet more distinctly opposed to Latinism? We all know the prejudices which Englishmen, almost with their mother's milk, suck in against the Western Church. Is it not a fact that many and many a Priest, devoted heart and soul to the cause of the Catholic faith, has never been able to rid himself of those prejudices, views and speaks of Rome with an abhorrence that is inexplicable on any general principle, and would contemplate secession anywhere rather than to her? Is it not also the case that a deeper grasp and a more vivid apprehension of those great truths, which Rome has held, and which we have obscured, by no means implies a diminution of this prejudice against Rome itself?

Now, however this feeling is to be explained, it is not to be ignored. To me it assuredly seems one of the many intimations that it is here, here where we are, here where we hope to continue, that God's salvation will come to us. "Put thou thy trust in the LORD, and be doing good; *dwell in the land*, and verily shalt thou be fed."

And if Rome points to her numerous converts, especially from our Priests, we may well reply, It

is wonderful that there are not more. Sixty-seven out of fifteen thousand, and they, with a very few exceptions, none of the most laborious, none of the most pious, none of the most learned among their brethren. And can we regard it as less than providential that the name of him who was long the intellectual head of the movement, but who was afterwards to leave it, should not have become the by-word by which common parlance stigmatised his soldiers ?

And think for one moment of the temptations which Rome presents to minds but newly opened to the truth. Remember our own miserable divisions—how heresy is allowed and promoted—how truth is discountenanced and persecuted—how heavy is the tyranny of the State—how the voice of the Church is forcibly silenced—how the highest, the unblushing aim of ecclesiastical dignitaries is, like fawning drudges, to give “satisfaction to the public”—how much mistrust there is even between ourselves—how some complain of the slow progress, some of the rapid advance, of others—how we want leaders, organization, tact—how little sympathy we receive—how this sect is everywhere spoken against. Add to this the once-a-week services, the Sunday religion, the infamous buildings, the undisguised Protestantism with which we have

to contend: and then contrast with all this the view of Rome at a distance—her professed infallibility—her high dogmatic teaching—her seeming unanimity—her daily sacrifice—her freedom in this country from Erastian control—her religious houses—her glorious ceremonial: and the wonder is, not that seventy priests should have left us, but that ten times seventy should not have seceded to her communion.

And, as it seems to me, there are three different safeguards which the providence of God has placed between an English priest and Rome.

The first of these—though it may, to a casual observer, seem a paradox to say so—consists in the very outcry which has been raised through England against, to use an every-day term, the Popery of Tractarianism. The being so constantly named in the same breath with Rome has made us feel more strongly the real differences which separate us. If we had not been compelled to bring the two systems into continual comparison, we might have persuaded ourselves that they were the same. Two shades of colour, till laid side by side, may seem identical; once compare them, and the difference can never be overlooked. And it is worthy of remark that, of the three English movements to Catholicity, the first the Caroline, and the last, our

own, had the same safeguard; while the second, that of the non-jurors (I do not mean their separation from the Church, but the influence they must have exercised while remaining in it) was never, in any great degree, branded as Popish. Laud, and Wren, and Montague, and Cosin, and Beaumont, and their fellows bore exactly the same reproaches which are now cast against us. To Sancroft, and Collier, and Brett, they were either not at all, or scarcely at all, applied. Now here also we may, perhaps, without presumption, discover the reason of this difference. The confessors of the seventeenth century were about, by exile, to be brought into close contact with the Roman system. We are so by the very force of circumstances. But the non-jurors had no affinity with the West; their sympathies were turned to the East, and with that they put themselves in communication. The discipline, therefore, that might be necessary for the Caroline divines, and for our own, might be uncalled for in the case of the non-jurors.

But another safeguard which has been given us against Rome lies in the very attitude she has assumed towards us. She offers not to us, as to others, the slightest compromise; she tolerates not in us, as in others, the least nationality. The Sarum and York Breviaries are equally proscribed

with an English Prayer Book. If in her view, we would be Catholic, we must be in thought, feeling, and sympathies, Italian. Is this a characteristic of that Church which is to have the heathen for her inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for her possession; whose dominion is to be from sea to sea, and from the flood unto the world's end?

But now imagine that, instead of adopting this system, Rome had thought fit to employ towards us the same course which, at the close of the sixteenth century, she adopted, and which she has since, till lately, maintained in Russia. Let us suppose that she had thought fit to authorise an Uniat English Church.

Let me explain more fully what I mean. In the year 1590, two dissolute Russian Priests conceived the idea of a communion, national in its rites and discipline, but attached to, and recognised by, Rome. Every facility was given for the formation of the United Russian Church. The marriage of Priests was allowed—the national (and vernacular) Liturgy was retained—even the adoption of the *Filioque* in the creed was not pressed. No wonder that a system, seeming to involve no change in faith or rites, and supported no less powerfully by Polish tyranny than by Roman gold, made thousands

of converts. And parallel with the *Unia* sprang up a pure Latin Church, using the language, the rites, and the ceremonies of Rome. In process of time it was found convenient to forbid change of communion from one of these Churches to the other. They were spoken of with equal honour, endued with the same privileges, and addressed as the Catholic Church of both rites in Russia. This was the state of things till the re-absorption of the *Unia*, in 1839, into the orthodox Russian Church.

Transfer the picture to England. Consider what an Uniat English Church would be. Our own Prayer Book, in our own language, employed by married Priests in union with Rome—our ordinations allowed, in case of reception into the *Unia*—this *Unia* the church of converts and their descendants, while for those who were not proselytes the Latin Ritual continued as now—imagine the communications of the Pope addressed to the Catholic Church of both rites in England; and as strict a prohibition against an Uniat Englishman's joining the Latin Rite, as for one under the latter to desert it for the former. This would, so far, present a parallel to the Uniat Church of Russia as it was.

But I may go still further. In the Uniat

Churches, whether of Russia, Armenia, or the Levant, the national calendar, except in the case of notorious heretics, was scarcely altered. It would only be to parallel such an arrangement were we to imagine that many of the works of English divines were not only allowed, but recommended, to the converts—that Pearson, and Butler, and Thorndike, were still familiar in their mouths as household words; and, had all this been done, would not the Anglo-Roman communion, in all probability, have numbered its thousands where it now barely reckons its tens?

There would have been difficulties, no doubt, in bringing such a scheme to pass; but I doubt if so great as those which were involved in the negotiations with the East. The use of a national and vernacular Liturgy—the marriage of Priests—the permission of the cup to the laity—these points were common to both: but two concessions were made to the Oriental, which the English Uniats would not have needed. I mean the use of the ancient creed, to the exclusion of the *Filioque*, and the invocation of the HOLY GHOST in the Liturgy, which separates the time of the change of the elements from that of the pronounciation of the words of institution.

Against these difficulties of doctrine, we must

set on our side that great one of discipline, the recognition of our orders. But even this, perhaps, might not have been so excessive as would at first be thought. A Commission of eminent divines might have sat on the subject, and, as they would have had no bias to either side, we may fairly conclude that their report would have established (that which, be it remembered, Rome has never formally denied) the validity of English ordinations. But even if it did not come to so favourable a conclusion, it is incredible that such a commission would have absolutely pronounced against our orders. Its most unfavourable view would simply have been that they were doubtful. And there would have been the place for conditional reordination—a rite by no means unknown to Rome; and of which I remember one celebrated example in the history of the Portuguese Church.

And now see to what conclusions the absence of such an Unia leads. For my own part, I must freely confess that, even in case—which God forbid!—our Church should ever fall away to heresy, still I do not see how I could join the Roman communion, if for no other reason, yet for these. I presume, my reverend brethren, we are each and all of us absolutely persuaded that we have the Apostolical succession among us—that

we have the grace of priesthood, the power of absolution, the power of consecration. As matters now stand, therefore, any one of us who should otherwise be tempted to join the Roman communion, would find himself in a sore strait. He has vowed to do the work of a Priest in the Church of God ; yet that vow can only be kept by re-ordination. What is he to do ? To perjure himself in the sight of God and man, by retiring from the Priesthood to which he knows himself to be called ; or to be guilty of spiritual incest, by receiving, for the second time, that sacramental grace which he knows to have been already conferred ? Or, again, what is a married Priest to do ? Here another difficulty intervenes. For grant that he may, in this case, be so thoroughly persuaded of the infallibility of Rome as to be willing, without a pang, to submit to re-ordination, still it avails him nothing. There he stands, vowed to the priesthood, yet unable to exercise his office ; incapacitated, through no fault of his own, but by an arbitrary restriction which Rome will not remove for him, though she will for all but him. A Greek or a Russian Priest may join the Latin communion, and continue to exercise his sacerdotal power. So may a Priest of Churches confessedly heretical,—Coptic, Nestorian, Armenian, Syro-

Jacobite ; England only is excluded from the offer. Nor can I doubt that the wise providence of God thus straitens our path to Rome as a warning mark that "this is not the way, neither is this the city."

But you may say, what if Rome herself were now to remove these restrictions? What if she were to offer us the same terms of communion that she has offered to others? What if she were to authorise an English Unia? I answer that, manifestly, such a concession now would be a very different thing. It would come in clear hopelessness of success in any other way. If right now, it was right three centuries ago ; and if right three centuries ago, on whose head (assuming the Roman theory to be true, and that salvation, generally, cannot be had out of that communion) on whose head rests the blood of all Englishmen whom such a concession, made when made to Russia, would have saved? No, an offered Unia now would, however much to the credit of Rome's present charity, speak but little in praise of her past love, or her past wisdom, but still less for her past infallibility.

The third providential warning which God, at this time, seems to have given us against Rome, exists in the remarkable development which her

missionary zeal is at the present moment taking throughout the country. It cannot be for nothing that Oratorianism has been suffered to spring up amongst us. It cannot be for nothing that the ancient art, the ancient ritual, the ancient symbolism, which we are carefully studying, and anxiously reviving, should be flung away, as unfit for her work, by missionary Rome. It cannot be without significance that the very thing, a vernacular service, on which for three centuries she has been lavishing her bitterest expressions, should now be put forward as the means of evangelising this country. It cannot but be intended as a warning, that the most favourite devotions of modern Rome have scarcely an antiquity of two centuries; that is, are coeval with the latest part of the English Prayer Book; that some are not fifty years old; that the Sacred Heart, that the Month of Mary, are now, what can I call it, but the *fashion*? that S. Joseph, who for so many centuries had actually no commemoration in the Roman calendar, should now be exalted to a height of glory from which the rest of the blessed company on high are excluded—

*There is no Saint in heaven I worship like thee,
Sweet spouse of our Lady! O deign to love me!*

that S. Mary is absolutely made our mediatrix with him—

*With her Babe in her arms, surely Mary will be,
Sweet spouse of our Lady! my pleader with thee!*

It cannot be for nothing that language, utterly unknown to all past ages of the Church, and positively indecorous in itself, should now be approved by authority, such as the following:—"Oh, modest, downcast, loving eyes of the Virgin Mother of my Divine JESUS! Oh, that it could be granted to me one day to behold you! Oh, fresh and blooming cheeks of this dear Virgin! Oh, that I could conceive that modest blush which suffused her virginal face at the salutation even of God's angel! Oh, that blush would suffice to purify the heart of the most shameless libertine, could it be granted to such an one to behold the blushes of God's Mother!"

And then, lastly, what can be said of the turning point of Liguorism? Was it ever heard, till within the last fifty years, that S. Mary should be thus made the centre of the Christian system? It is no question of words, of phrases, of detached prayers or hymns. Let mediæval expressions towards our Lady have been what they may. Let the addresses of the Eastern Church to the Mother of God be never so strong. They are wide of the

question. The charge is this: that Liguorism does, while mediæval and Eastern theology do not, make S. Mary take the place of our Blessed LORD. Could S. Bernard or S. Bonaventura—ay, and let me come later, could S. Thomas of Villanova or S. Charles Borromeo—be at once introduced to Oratorianism, they would call it, and rightly call it, a new religion. I am not about to enter into the nature and limits of development. But this is no more a development than it would be to assert a Quaternity instead of a TRINITY. Fearfully near to this doctrine, indeed, came the heresy beginning to be introduced into some monastic bodies towards the commencement of the sixteenth century—that the Blessed Virgin had been *assumed into* the TRINITY.

And, it seems to me, there is every probability that Oratorianism will develop itself into a heresy. It has just the materials of which heresies are compounded: a burning hatred of one particular phase of false doctrine; neophyte teachers, who have undergone all the laceration of faith involved in leaving one communion for another; superiors afraid to check, lest they should seem to give countenance to Protestantism. Doubtless, in time, Rome will either stifle Oratorianism, or cut it off; but, in the meanwhile, it is surely for us to

learn the lesson that results from its being the focus and deposit of all convert zeal.

Here I will pause ; and will only ask you to join with me in the prayer that that blessed day may be hastened, when, according to the saying of the Prophet, Judah shall not vex Israel, nor Israel vex Judah, as now—in some sort necessarily—is the case ; but both shall fly upon the Philistines—on idolatry, heresy, worldliness,—and lead captivity captive, and be clear as the sun, fair as the moon, terrible as an army with banners. Which the Head of the Church grant, for His Passion's sake ; to Whom, with the FATHER and the HOLY GHOST, be all glory for ever. Amen.

IV.

THE MISSION OF THE SCOTCH CHURCH.

After this manner, therefore, pray ye :—" Our FATHER Which art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name."—*S. Matthew vi. 3 **

IT is impossible to look round on such a congregation, assembled on such an occasion, without some thoughts which, if I came among you by my own authority, or were speaking to you of my own wisdom, might well make me tremble. It is not as if we all, who are met together in the House of God, were assembled for the same purpose. It is not as if I could speak to all of you whom I now see before me as my brethren in the faith ; as holding the same creeds, as knit together in the same fellowship, as waiting in the same hope, and rejoicing in the same consolation. But I know that, while I am speaking to some who are the dear and faithful children of the true,

* Preached at the consecration of the Cathedral Church of S. Ninian, at PERTH, on Wednesday morning, Dec. 11, 1850.

though afflicted, Church of GOD in this land, I am also addressing others who have been brought here to-day rather as to a spectacle than by sympathy, who regard her, perhaps with suspicion, perhaps with fear, perhaps with dislike, but certainly not with affection, certainly not with obedience.

And, therefore, it is to my comfort that, in the text which I have taken, we shall all find something in which to agree. *Our Father Which art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name.* It would be easier, and GOD knows a great deal more pleasant, if I were to tell you how, by services like these, we make this earth, in some small degree, like that heaven wherein our FATHER is: how, by such buildings and such offices, we know that GOD's name is hallowed, and is to be hallowed. It would be easy for me to lead on your thoughts from this visible and material church to that Church of the First-born, written in heaven, the delights whereof eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive: to proceed from the consideration of the earthly to that of the celestial temple. But I dare not do so. I dare not, in speaking to a congregation like this, neglect the opportunity which seems to be offered me of reaching some who, in the ordinary course of things, might never hear such a message.

While we have time, says the Apostle, let us do good unto all men. And such a time, my brethren, neither you nor I may ever have again.

Will you then bear with me, my brethren—I speak to those who are not members of the Church—will you then bear with me if, as shortly as I can, I try to set forth to you some thoughts which may tend, by God’s blessing, to bring you back into the fold? Will you bear with me if I tell you why we come among you at all, and why we come among you thus? And if I should seem to say anything harsh or unkind, may God forgive me! and you will forgive me also; for, after all, I am but saying to you as Moses to Hobab, “We are journeying to the place whereof the LORD our God hath told us: come thou with us, and we will do thee good.”

Now, first, let me say what it is that we claim to do. We claim to be God’s appointed messengers to you, even though you refuse to hear our message. We claim to have the charge of your souls—yes, of all your souls—as they that must give account. We claim to be a part of that Church of God which is to receive the nations for her inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for her possession, when the kingdoms of this world shall have become the kingdoms of our

LORD and of His CHRIST. It is not as if we professed to be Episcopalians only, merely one sect among a hundred; as if we preferred our form of worship for its beauty or its scripturalness, while we were tolerant of the rest, and did not condemn others. But it is because we *are* exclusive, because we *are* what the world calls intolerant, that we are come among you now.

Now this is neither the time nor the place to enter upon the reasons why we know that our LORD's promise, to be with His Church continually, even unto the end of the world, *is* made to us, and is *not* made to you. But, oh! that I could say anything to remove but one difficulty in the way of your joining us! Let me speak to you with all plainness. Do not you think of us, as if the outside of religion were all that we cared about? Do you not believe that the internal work of God in the soul of man, real earnest piety, vital godliness, is not our aim? Is it not true that this service in which you have been present to-day has confirmed you in this belief? That the music, the form, the ceremony, has led you to think show the end and object of our religion? has induced you to regard us as mere formalists? Oh, if you did but know—Oh, if you could but see—how precisely this is contrary to the truth! how sweet

sounds, and fair forms, and bright colours, we regard as utterly worthless, except as means to an end ! And what is that end ? The glory of our dear LORD and Master ; and, for the sake of that glory, the salvation of those for whom He died. Oh, if you could but tell, how entirely, from first to last, it is to Him that we look ; it is in Him that we trust ; to His most precious Passion that we flee for refuge ; to his unconquerable Wounds that we betake ourselves for strength ! And can you think that this is to be formalists ?—that this is to be self-confident ?—that this is to look for salvation from ourselves ?—that this is to substitute good works for the LORD'S death ! Assuredly we do speak of the merit of good works : assuredly we teach that if we do His Commandments, we shall have right to the Tree of Life. But how ?—Because He gave us the power to perform them : because He worketh in us both to will and to do them. He made them acceptable to Himself ; our will and our strength are His ; and as He prepared them for us first, so His be the glory of them first and last.

What I would pray that you might see, is this : how all that you have in your own system, and all that you think, or hope you have ; that, in a tenfold degree, the Church provides for you. How,

for example, your own favourite theme of the sinfulness of the sinner, and the entire merits of the SAVIOUR, is grasped by us with a living energy of belief which you cannot comprehend. How that faith, of which you talk so much, we see to be indeed the husk without the grain: and that what you mean, you cannot, where you now are, possess. I am not saying this, you will remember, by way of proving that the truth is on our side: but only, if it might be so, by way of removing some difficulties in your beholding it there.

And when you contrast, as many of you no doubt have been contrasting, our comparatively gorgeous service of this morning with your own usual forms of public prayer, no doubt you imagine that by these you have met with spiritual profit, and an advance in the love of God, which you never could have found among us. I would have you consider this. Is it not possible that we may be speaking a high and holy language, which you, at present, cannot comprehend? May it not be as unreasonable to condemn us for its use, as it would be to rebuke a foreigner for praying in a tongue which to us seemed uncouth? These chants, these forms, are not things tacked on to our prayers, but are our natural language, the natural breath of prayer itself. Yes, my brethren ;

and it is a touching thought, as I look upon you now, and see that many of you do not believe what I am saying; to look forward to that time when some, God grant many, of you shall, in spite of your system, through the super-exceeding merits of His Passion, Who died for all, be counted worthy of the kingdom of heaven: and to know that they also will then speak our own language, when they shall join in the song of Moses and the LAMB; when they shall hear the melody of harpers harping with their harps, and the voice, as the sound of a great multitude, of them that say—Amen, Alleluia.

But this I would have you remember:—It is an awful thing to hear the truth. It cannot be proclaimed to you, and you be neither better nor worse. And this is the truth, truth as sure as God's word, which (though with frailty, and infirmity enough, He knows,) I tell you this day. How far you sin by absolutely and at once refusing to hear, must depend on what measure of grace you have already attained; for by that you will be judged. If, as you ought, you are endeavouring to go on from strength to strength in practice, you will be led on from strength to strength in faith. "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." Whatever

difficulties these words bring with them, and I do not deny that they *are* accompanied with great difficulties, still they are His, Who cannot lie. I call upon you then to pray,—in your own way at present, but to pray earnestly. I call upon you to believe,—in your own way at present, but with all your heart : to do good works,—in your own way at present, but still relying upon that HOLY GHOST Who was given to you at your baptism, to do them abundantly. And then, as surely as God is true, I know what must be the consequence ; I know that you will be led into fuller truth : I know that you will be brought home where we would have you to be.

You think, perhaps, that I am forgetting the text. I am not indeed. There I am taught to pray that God's Name may be hallowed. And how can it be more fitly hallowed than by the means of your becoming members of CHRIST's One Body, which is the Church ? Oh that it may thus be sanctified ! that you, casting aside the husks of vain human traditions, may return to that house of our FATHER, where there is bread enough, and to spare ! that, relying no longer on the teaching of fallible men, you would embrace the teaching of that Church which can neither deceive nor be deceived ! Then, indeed, we shall more fully say : Our FATHER ; our FATHER, not only so then by

creation, but by that still dearer band of faith and fellowship, in which we shall be knit together in CHRIST JESUS.

And now, my brethren, I turn to you—to you who have been called into God's holy Church, and who profess to believe and to act as she teaches and commands. Consider how fearful will be your responsibility if by your means His name should be blasphemed, or His Church dishonoured;—if those who might have been with us should be set against us;—if those should perish for whom CHRIST died? Remember that you are marked men. Remember that a city set upon a hill cannot be hid. Shall it ever be said, These are they who believe that in Baptism their bodies are made Temples of the HOLY GHOST; and how do they dishonour those Temples? These are the men who teach that they receive the Body and Blood of our LORD in the Holy Eucharist, and how lightly do they set by it? These are they who hold that the graces of the HOLY SPIRIT are renewed and strengthened in them at Confirmation; and how do they give themselves up to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life? And this is more especially true to you, my dear children, who belong to our schools, and to you above all, choristers of the Cathedral

Church. Think of what you owe to it. Think of what you owe to Him Who, now and henceforth, dwelleth in the midst of it. Think how that Name should be hallowed in you, which you so often sing, which you so often declare to be praised from the rising up of the sun unto the going down of the same, for the sake of which you so often pray that God would arise and deliver you. If, after all, you should dishonour that glorious Name, will not the very stones of this place immediately cry out against you?

And you, my reverend brethren of a Church, to have renewed and re-asserted communion with which I deem none of the least honours of my own dear Mother, the Church of England; will you also suffer the word of exhortation from one, unworthy indeed to address you from this place, but who so speaks because he so deeply feels the importance of what he is saying? May I doubt whether you have hitherto so fully set forth our Common Mission to those who are not of us, as the fearful responsibility of our office demands? May I doubt whether the Scottish Church has not too much seemed a harmless, inoffensive sect, wishing to make no proselytes, desiring to live and let live in peace? Remember, I beseech you, that the very terms of our charter are to convert, that is, to

proselytise. “Go ye, and teach all nations.” Remember that there is no medium. If it is not your duty to proselytise from, it is your duty to conform to, the established religion. If you do not claim to be solely Catholics, you are infallibly schismatics, and schismatics of the worst description, æsthetical schismatics. And if it shall happen that through your neglect in setting forth these things, any of those who (though they own it not) are yours, should perish; ye know, to use the words of our common ordinal, the greatness of the fault and the horrible punishment that must ensue. But rather, through evil report and good report, in spite of the jeers and ridicule of a world that hates the truth, in the midst of much tribulation, go forward to that which, but for your own fault, must be your victory. And thus follow, in your contest with sin and Satan, his blessed example whose Church we are this day dedicating—Saint Ninian, the Apostle of the Picts. So, being wise, shall you shine as the brightness of the firmament; and so, turning many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever.

Our Father Which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Yes, and it is hallowed this day. It is a great joy, a great matter of thankfulness, that we have been permitted to see the first consecra-

tion of a British Cathedral which has taken place for five hundred years. The LORD has indeed, to a certain extent, turned again the captivity of Sion. Contrast the scenes, which the venerable Bishop of this Diocese must have beheld when, at his ordination, the penal laws were still in force, and he was the companion of those holy men who, in the midst of cruel persecutors, still handed down the sacraments of the Church, and the power of the keys ; contrast them, I say, with what, could he be with us in body as he is in spirit, he would now behold ! The LORD hath done great things for us already, whereof we rejoice. And so in faith and patience we will yet wait till she who is still forsaken and hated, so that few pass through her, shall be made an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations.

And now to Him, Who is the true foundation and the precious corner stone, be ascribed, with the FATHER and the HOLY GHOST, all honour and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

V.

CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE.

“He that hath the bride is the Bridegroom ; but the friend of the Bridegroom, that standeth and heareth Him, rejoiceth greatly because of the Bridegroom’s voice : this my joy therefore is fulfilled.”—*S. John* iii. 29.*

THIS day stands out from the other festivals of the Church as something apart and by itself. The LORD’s messenger shall have his birthday to temporal, not to eternal, life, principally commemorated. He that shall foretell CHRIST, shall be foretold by an angel. He that shall preach to the people, shall be preached in the temple. He shall be called by his name before his conception. He shall prophesy by his father’s dumbness, before by his own voice. He shall testify to that in his mother’s womb, whereof afterward he doubted.

* Preached at S. —, London, on S. John Baptist’s Day, the Fourth Sunday after Trinity, 1849 : the Marriage Bill then pending in Parliament.

He, the first in time, shall be the last in honour. He, the last of the old dispensation, shall be greater than all its saints. He shall not be That Light, but of That Light he shall bear witness. His shall not be the true baptism, yet he shall baptize its Author. He shall die a martyr, yet not for the name of CHRIST. He shall die a martyr, yet he shall not be called by that title. He is that Elias which was for to come. He is that Cyrus, of whom it is written, He shall fulfil all My pleasure ; even saying to Jerusalem—the spiritual Jerusalem—thou shalt be built ; and to the temple—the temple of God's elect—thy foundation shall be laid : by preaching Him, other foundation than Whom can no man lay.

On these thoughts, and such as these, the Fathers love to dwell ; and on any of them we might profitably employ this evening in meditation. But we will rather take a passage, the full meaning of which lies a little deeper, and dwell upon it, as GOD the HOLY GHOST, by the writings of the Doctors of His Church, shall have set it forth to us.

These words would be remarkable, if for nothing else, yet for this,—that they are the first time in the New Testament in which the Church is spoken of under the character of a bride ; the first time that we learn to how sublime and excellent a

mystery marriage was to be consecrated; with what sacramental grace endowed. And consequently, how fearful is the danger, and how horrible will be the punishment, of them that in any way violate it, in themselves or for others. In themselves, instead of entering into, and abiding in, that state reverently, advisedly, discreetly, soberly, and in the fear of God, by so speaking of it, and so acting in it, as if it were of the earth, earthy, as if they were brute beasts that have no understanding. For others, in presuming, with profane hands, to touch this, a type and figure of the true Ark of the Covenant; to remove the ancient landmarks which their fathers have set.

It is the expostulation of God in Isaiah, "What could have been done more for My vineyard that I have not done in it?" Most wonderfully, indeed, on all the commonest occurrences of life, the impress of something better is implanted. It is almost as if God would save us in spite of ourselves; as if all the inlets of danger He made avenues of salvation; just as on stormy headlands and perilous rocks at sea men built lofty light-houses; just as on the most dangerous mountain-pass the most able guide is to be found. Take, now, one of the commonest objects in this world; it is by water that it has pleased God to accomplish

our regeneration. What more common? What, but for this, less likely to raise our thoughts to heaven? How we should have viewed it, left to ourselves, there are, even yet, passages of Holy Scripture which may teach us. “Unstable as water,” saith Jacob; “the wicked are like the troubled sea,” saith Isaiah; “raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame,” saith Jude. But now the SPIRIT of GOD,—with all reverence I say it,—still moves upon the face of the waters: and as He once gave them power to regenerate us, so now He gives them the opportunity of symbolising to us our duties and our privileges. Are we walking by a river? “There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God.” Are we standing on the sea shore? “His dominion shall be also from sea to sea.” Does the rain fall? “He shall come down like the rain upon the mown grass; even as the drops that water the earth.” Yes; perpetually are we reminded, by our use of water, of that stream which washes away the filth of the spirit; that we are born again by that Sacrament which CHRIST ordained, and of which the Baptist preached.

So, in like manner, by one of those mysterious antitheses of which the Christian dispensation is so full, as water once destroyed the earth, and

water shall save it,—so it was by eating, that sin entered into the world, and it is by eating, namely, our LORD'S Body and Blood, that we assure our joyful Resurrection. Bread, the staff of life, is turned into angel's food. Behold, no longer is it the sustenance of life only, but our staff in the valley of the shadow of death; formed of many grains beaten into one mass, it cements the multitude of the faithful into one body; the fruit of that green herb which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, it bears for us the fruit of immortality. So wine, by which so many sins have been wrought, from the time of Noah to this day, becomes, by the operation of the HOLY SPIRIT, that precious Blood, one drop of which is able to cleanse the sins of the whole world.

Thus much, and (perhaps) rather too much, on the analogy we are considering. And now here, we find the first institution of God, namely, marriage, elevated and consecrated in an inexpressible degree. It is true that we have intimations, as of Baptism and the LORD'S Supper, so of this, in the Old Testament. Not to mention that wonderful Song of songs, which, now that love has grown cold, is neglected almost by all—constantly in the prophets are we told, As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice

over thee : that He will rest in His love ; that thy God delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married.

It is a thought on which we do not dwell,—is it because of the lowness of our lives, or the weakness of our faith?—that when we entered into this state, we deliberately and advisedly constituted ourselves types of CHRIST. Seeing that this is so, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness ? It has been made the subject of much discussion, what is that particular grace which is bestowed by the celebration of marriage. Some have held it to be the grace of love given to the parties, to remain betwixt them in spite of mutual failings and infirmities, and the wear and tear of a miserable and naughty world. Others have imagined it the grace of wisdom, that children may be virtuously brought up to lead a godly and a Christian life. But surely rather, as others think, it is the grace of being made, in a very especial manner, types of CHRIST. Mystical virtue went forth from the very hem of His robe, and healed the infirm woman, trembling though she came to touch it. Doubt not, therefore, but earnestly believe, that in this, partial, and imperfect, and materialised though the resemblance be, virtue nevertheless resides. And it is a high

privilege, that not one act of love, of comfort, of authority, can be performed by the husband to the wife, but finds its antitype in the exceeding great love of our Master for the Church. S. Paul gives a motto for the state, "Even as the LORD the Church." That kept in mind, should we not be ashamed that Christian marriage is the worldly thing it is?—that Christian households, as households, make so small progress in religion?—that Christian tongues will speak so lightly, and Christian hearts think so unworthily, of this great mystery? Is it "as the LORD the Church," I marvel, that there is so much unkindness, so little forbearance, so much evil speaking, so much strife? Is it not, rather, as if we took a pleasure in defacing the image that He has impressed? And again, to take the other side of the picture:—Is it not a high and holy thing to be constituted a type of the Church?—of her in whom shall be found neither spot, nor blemish, nor any such thing; in whom all the graces of God are laid up; the mother of such innumerable saints; the strengthener of such glorious martyrs; that cannot be deceived, and that cannot lie; the fulness of Him That filleth all in all? This, ever since the Mother of God removed the curse introduced by the mother of mankind, that as by the un-

belief of a woman sin entered into the world, by the faith of a woman life also should enter,—(for the fathers are constant that, if S. Mary had hesitated in receiving the angelic message, the whole economy of grace would have been frustrated)—ever since, I say, this has been your high vocation. See, then, that what your condition sets forth, your lives do not disclaim.

I said that, if but for these considerations, the text would be most remarkable, most full of deep mystery. But now, by whom was it spoken? The speaker, in all cases, gives half the meaning to the words. We are not surprised to find the Apostle of love so earnest in teaching, “Little children, love one another;” we are not surprised to find S. Paul, who himself had fought with beasts at Ephesus, uttering the exhortation, “Fight the good fight of faith.” But who is this that first tells us of the dignity of Christian marriage? It is the Saint of this day; the spiritual father of those holy men who wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth; who clad themselves in sheep-skins and in goat-skins; who forsook fathers and mothers, brethren and sisters, wife and children, for their LORD; of whom the world was not worthy; for whom the wilderness and the solitary

place were glad; for whom the desert rejoiced, and blossomed as a rose; who, passing through the valley of Baca, made it a well; who, doubtless, if they had desired the country whence they set forth, might have had opportunity to have returned,—but now they desired a better country, that is, an heavenly; who have long since had their reward in heaven, where they hunger no more, neither thirst any more,—and their reward, too, on earth, for men have reviled them, and persecuted them, and said all manner of evil against their memories falsely for His sake. Yes: it was this saint, that wore camel's hair, whose food was locusts and wild honey, that spake these words. He it was that first taught us this great mystery.

And mark, with how holy boldness he calls himself the friend of the Bridegroom. Abraham, the father of the faithful, was called the friend of God; but we never read that he presumed to call himself so. Here also we see that, among them that were born of women, there had not arisen a greater than John the Baptist. He, the austere man, the dweller in the wilderness, the friend of Him of Whom, in that very character here named, those who have entered into Christian marriage are a type! Truly, “all members have not the same

office." One in the desert with the wild beasts; another in the dear home, with the love of a family. Yet both shall be ordered by that One and the self-same SPIRIT; both shall all their lives fight one and the same fight; both shall be received into one paradise at last.

Would you yet hear more of S. John Baptist? Think you that I have spoken too much of ourselves, and too little of him? Two points of his character we will notice from the text. Of that character the Collect for the day gives the popular view; "Constantly speak the truth, boldly rebuke vice, and patiently suffer for the truth's sake." It does not profess to embrace it all. Shall we not from the text learn his humility? how he, the prophet famous all over Israel, sets himself below the yet unknown Bridegroom? Are there many fathers who, even of a beloved son, would delight in using the words, and be earnest in having them believed—"He must increase, but I must decrease?" Take the circumstances into consideration: S. John's birth manifestly miraculous: our LORD's thought to be according to the ordinary course of nature; S. John the elder, and already known over Palestine; our LORD the younger, and a dweller in an infamous city; S. John the son of a Priest, our LORD of a carpenter. Yet gladly did

he see his mission at an end, his disciples fall off, his work no longer to do but to suffer; gladly did he utter the words, "The latchet of His shoe I am not worthy to unloose." And note the deep meaning of that speech. Incidentally, in the Book of Ruth, we find that, when a man refused to redeem his inheritance, this was the manner in former times; that the refuser plucked off his shoe, and gave it to his neighbour. But our LORD, so far from refusing to redeem His inheritance, left the throne for the cradle, and passed, through the cross, into hell, that, accomplishing all things in Himself, He might ransom it. Most fitly, therefore, is it said of Him, that the latchet of His shoe was not to be loosed.

But this humility is a constant feature of the blessed Baptist's character; one other part of it here only appears, or if not here only, here most principally. Austere in life and words, here he shows such tender, such intense love, as perhaps we could scarcely parallel even in the Epistles of S. John. "The friend of the Bridegroom, that standeth and heareth Him, rejoiceth greatly because of the Bridegroom's voice; this my joy therefore is fulfilled." It is full of more than a woman's tenderness. Now his course was done—all but its end of blood: it was enough for him to

stand by that dear LORD, to hear His words, words not addressed to himself, but to another—for to whom else than the bride should the Bridegroom speak?—should hear Him without, so to speak, attracting His attention to himself,—it was enough to hear the beloved Voice, to see the beloved Face. Enough? Nay, it is the desire of his heart. It is joy; it is *my* joy, that joy beyond which I have nothing further to wish: it is *this* my joy—as if there could be none other: and as it was begun, so also is it finished, in this order of things—“this my joy is fulfilled.”

And here, under other circumstances, I might end. But it is our duty, as ambassadors of God, to be instant, if at all times, yet in season particularly; to warn, if against all perils, certainly against present dangers especially. And God has wonderfully ordered it, that the word spoken in season, which is so good, should frequently be suggested by the regular course of the Church's year. We must often have noticed how, in any difficulty, or danger, or crisis of our own lives, the regular words of the Church in her daily offices have been precisely those which were most suitable to our own case. So in the trials and struggles of the Church itself, the offices which she had centuries before marked out, are just those most applicable to her after

need. Thus wise men of old have noted the number of the festivals of Virgin Martyrs which fall in Advent, as if to teach us that we, during that holy season, are to be like the Virgins that waited for their LORD's coming. So—to come nearer our own time, and into our own Church—when, as on next Friday, the seven Bishops were on their trial for disobedience to the unjust commands of a King, the Epistle of the day told how, when Peter was kept in prison, and prayer was made without ceasing of the Church to God for him, the Angel of the LORD opened the prison doors, and led him out safely, so that he feared not.

Now, what is the Collect for this day? That, after the example of S. John Baptist, we may boldly rebuke vice, and patiently suffer for the truth's sake. These words have a meaning now which they perhaps never had before—a meaning, too, naturally connecting itself with that subject, on which the former part of the text led me to dwell. What vice was that of which the Baptist spoke? “Herod,” says S. Matthew, “had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife.” “For,” adds S. Mark, “he had married her; for John had said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee

to have thy brother's wife." It is true that Philip was alive at the time; but it is also true that he had divorced his wife; therefore, according to the law (not then abrogated) any other man, save Herod, might lawfully have married her. But not he. S. John said unto him, "It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife." Would to God there were no parallel in the case to our present circumstances! Would to God that the counterpart of that which was abominable and not to be tolerated in a Herod, and the rebuking of which conferred on S. John Baptist the glory of martyrdom, had not been, by part of a Christian legislature—whom God pardon!—declared to be allowable! What though the words of infallible Scripture, after a catalogue of abominations, of which it is shocking to Christian men to speak or to think—but of which this is one—conclude, "Ye shall not commit any of these abominations, that the land spue not you out also, when ye defile it, as it spued out the nations that were before you:" what though the sanctity of marriage among the Jews was as nothing to that which should prevail among Christians; these men have dared flatly to give God the lie, and, whereas He hath said, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they

two shall be one flesh," as far as their power extends, to enact that they shall be one flesh no longer.

All public, and chiefly all legislative, violations of the law of God must always be awful; but above all, one of this character. For we see—dimly and indistinctly indeed, but yet certainly—that some dreadful teaching, some doctrines of devils on the subject of marriage will precede or accompany the coming of Antichrist, and the final apostacy. Partly, perhaps, we have seen this fulfilled in the case of those miserable men who declare two main roots of the wretchedness of this world to be, religion and marriage. God grant that this new event be not the first of a series of further manifestations to the same effect!

In the meantime, the practical inference for ourselves is clear. In the first place, to pray that this great curse to our Church and nation may yet, by God's mercy, be averted; and we know for our comfort, that "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." How much more then, of so many righteous men as will doubtless make supplications in this matter! But if not, as it will be our part and duties to see—and doubt not but by God's grace we *will* see—that no persons thus defiling themselves shall receive the

Church's benediction on their sin; so it will be yours to follow the command of the Apostle S. John, and neither "to receive them into your house, nor bid them God speed: for he that biddeth them God speed is partaker of their evil deeds." To the same purpose S. Paul also writes, "Neither be partaker of other men's sins; keep thyself pure." This at least we can do; and if we suffer reproach or loss thereby, happy are we; for it will be for His Name's sake. So shall we best receive an answer to the Collect of the day, in which we will immediately join, "and patiently suffer for the truth's sake."

And now to Him of Whom the Baptist spake, be ascribed, with the FATHER and the HOLY GHOST, all honour and glory for ever. Amen.

VI.

PROPHECIES OF BAPTISMAL GRACE.

“In His time shall the righteous flourish: yea, and abundance of peace, so long as the moon endureth. His dominion shall be also from the one sea to the other: and from the flood unto the world’s end.”—*Psalm lxxii.* 7, 8.

THIS Psalm seems to have been the last which King David wrote: for we read at the end, like a note, “The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.” If so, then, just as Moses, before he fell on sleep, gat him up to Mount Pisgah, and saw all that goodly land, which the Lord had promised to Israel, so David also, before he rested from his labours, was allowed to go up to this holy mountain of prophecy, and thence to behold the good things which God had prepared for his elect people, the History of the True Church of the Future. And let us for a little while try to forget the burden and heat of the day which we are still bearing, let us forget the battle which is raging around us, and go up with

David to that hill, whence he saw the vision which he has written down in the present Psalm. So we shall be more prepared to fight the good fight of God against sin, the world and the devil, knowing that only through much tribulation can we enter into the possession of those good things of which he here speaks.

In *His* days shall the righteous flourish. And therefore, first we ask, whose days? The prophet is no doubtful guide: he will give us full satisfaction herein. For thus he begins the Psalm—Give the King Thy judgments, O God: and Thy righteousness unto the King's Son. Who is the King but He of whom it is written, He shall reign for ever and ever, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords—even He That for our sakes was once crowned with thorns, but has now put on the diadem of everlasting glory? And who is the King's Son, but the same our LORD JESUS CHRIST, of Whom it is written that, though He were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which He suffered? Therefore, in that He is called a King, the excellent glory of His Majesty is set forth: in that He is called the King's Son, the depth of His humiliation is displayed. In His days, then, that is, in the days of our LORD CHRIST, shall the righteous flourish.

But now, what are His days? Seeing that He is from everlasting to everlasting, what is that time of which David now speaks? No doubt, in the fullest sense of the word, these days mean the blessed estate of the Saints of God in Heaven: when, like Ahasuerus, our LORD shall make a feast to all his princes and servants, when He shall show the riches of His glorious kingdom, and the honour of His excellent Majesty many days, even an eternity of them. Then, indeed, the righteous shall flourish: for into that city there shall in no wise enter anything that defileth: then Jacob shall become Israel; that is, the earthly man shall pass into the heavenly, and with the new nature receive the new name; then, as our LORD shall be exalted far above all principality and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, so His faithful servants and friends, who, when they were in this naughty world, drank of the cup that He drank of, and were baptised with the Baptism that He was baptised with, shall be seated at His side, reigning in His heavenly mansion for ever and ever. But yet, as we shall see presently, we must rather take the *days* of this King to be the time in which His Church is militant here upon earth: the time between His ascension into heaven, and His coming again to

judge the quick and the dead; and therefore, among others, this time at which I speak, and at which you hear.

The righteous shall flourish in them. But how can this be? Do we not read that a fiery trial is to try us? that we can enter into the kingdom of God by no other road than by tribulation? that our way to eternal life is to suffer here with CHRIST? that it is they who mourn that are to be comforted? that it is they who are reviled and persecuted for CHRIST's sake of whom is the kingdom of heaven? And how then can it be said that the righteous flourish? Compare this with another passage of Scripture; and there we read that the righteous shall flourish as a tree. Now a tree flourishes for being pruned; a tree flourishes for being sometimes cut down almost to the ground; for being dug about and tended; nay, for being shaken with mighty tempests. Ask any ship-builder which oaks are the best, and he will answer: Those which grow on high places near the sea, on the wild tops of hills, on desolate heaths, where there is no shelter; because in all these situations they are constantly struggling and striving with the wind, and in that very strife and struggle they gain strength. So we do not here read that the righteous shall be free from

warfare and danger and affliction, for most assuredly he shall not : but he shall flourish notwithstanding all ; yes, and through all, yes, and because of all. Of our LORD Himself it is said that He is a fruitful vine, even a fruitful vine by a well, whose boughs ran over the wall ; that the archers sorely shot at Him, and wounded Him, and grieved Him ; yet, nevertheless, He abode in His strength. That which He endured, all His faithful servants must expect.

But now David proceeds, “ Yea, and abundance of peace, so long as the moon endureth.” By the moon we understand the Church militant. For just as the moon has all her light from the sun, and shines only in His absence ; so the Church has all her beauty and glory from her LORD, and was set here by Him to give light during His absence from us. And so it is written that God appointed two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, even our LORD, Who is Light of Light, to reign for ever and ever in the day of heaven, and the lesser light, which is the Church, to rule the night of this world. But in that it is said, *so long as the moon endureth*, we are not to think that the Church can ever end ; for as her LORD will reign for ever and ever, so must she also. But she will not then be like the moon : because

the true Sun will always there shine upon her, and where there is perfect day, there we cannot need an imperfect light.

Abundance of peace, so long as the moon endureth. What ! abundance of peace in this world, which is one long battle ! abundance of peace in a Church, which is called militant, that is, at war ! abundance of peace, when our LORD said, I came not to send peace, but a sword ! Even so. He saith not, continual peace, or entire peace, or perfect peace, but abundance of peace—that is, peace enough and to spare. And even thus also spoke our blessed LORD ; Peace I leave you, My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth give I unto you : that is, not rest from outward battle—not calm from outward storm—anything but ease from outward struggle—but peace, abundance of peace still. Peace, in knowing that if we only be God's true servants, all things shall work together for our good. Peace, by having the Spirit of peace in our hearts—peace, in knowing that all that can happen to us cannot touch our souls—peace, that the world gave not and cannot take away : so a dove may make its nest in the spray of a waterfall, and a marten build under the eaves of a manufactory. And thus it is written of a church in warfare with the world, Cry unto Jerusalem, that

her warfare *is*, not shall be, but that her warfare *is* accomplished; that her iniquity is pardoned. Yes, abundance of peace, so long as the moon endureth; and in that city which hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon to lighten it, infinite, perfect peace. For its very name is Jerusalem, which is, by interpretation, the Vision of Peace.

And now we come to the reason of this. His dominion also shall be from sea to sea. And where does our LORD's dominion, as our Redeemer, over us begin, but at baptism? Here, as so often, that blessed Sacrament is brought before us in a place where, at first, we should little seek it. I am persuaded, that if all the passages in the Psalms which touch on baptism were brought together, they would be so perfect a treatise on it as no writer of the Church has yet devised. And it is remarkable, that the four great divisions of the Old Testament—the Law, the historical books, the devotional and practical books, and the Prophets, have close to their beginning, a marked reference to baptism. Thus, at the opening of Genesis, The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. At the beginning of Joshua, Arise, and go over this Jordan, thou and all this people, unto the land which I shall give them.

At the beginning of the Psalms, He shall be like a tree that is planted by the rivers of water. And so, in the first chapter of Isaiah: *Wash you, make you clean.* So, all through Old Testament history, we have the same reference. Noah and his family are saved in the Ark from perishing by water. Israel is so baptised unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea. The stricken rock pours forth water. Israel cannot enter Canaan till they have passed the Jordan. When the kings came and fought against God's elect people, they are overthrown at Taanach by the *waters of Megiddo*. When Gideon's soldiers are to deliver Israel, they are brought down to the water. When the three kings are delivered from Midian, it was because there came waters by the way of the wilderness. And so I might go on. The blessed virtues of baptism are not written only in the New Testament, but in the Law, and the Psalms, and the Prophets, so that they who deny them are without excuse. It is the LORD That commandeth the waters—the rivers of the flood shall make glad the city of God—CHRIST's servants shall grow up as willows by the watercourses—Balaam speaks of the Church of God as of cedar trees beside the waters—Job tells us that God cutteth out the rivers among the rocks—the promise is, I will pour water upon

him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground—the blessing is for them that sow beside all waters.

And I was the more willing to speak to you of this text to-day, because of those false teachers who have denied that we are born again in holy baptism, thus giving the lie to the HOLY GHOST, and who now, in the wise providence of GOD, are permitted to vex the Church. Of them we may well remember that which S. Paul writes of Jannes and Jambres, and be well assured, that when they have done their work, they shall proceed no further, for their folly shall be manifest to all men, as theirs also was.

In the meantime, in your patience possess ye your souls. It is hard, I know, to hear on all sides blasphemy poured forth against one of the most sacred articles of our faith. It is hard to hear the grace of GOD reviled, and the HOLY GHOST mocked, in ignorance though it be, to His face. It is hard that we can scarcely take up a common newspaper without therein finding some attack on a truth, which we hold dearer than life. Yes, as dear as eternal life, because we know that eternal life has its origin in that which is thereby set forth. But all this is yet not without its use. It should lead us to examine ourselves, and see

whether we are in the faith. It should open our eyes to see—what I have partly been endeavouring to show you—how, not in the New Testament alone, but in almost every page of the Old Testament is that truth set forth, which modern unbelievers, with worse than Jewish blindness, reject. Into how great clearness of knowledge concerning the divinity of the SON of GOD was the Church led, by the Arian heresy, which so long vexed it! And not only may the like thing now happen; but many who have hitherto held baptismal regeneration indeed with their lips, but held it as a dead letter, may, under God, be brought to see it as it is, and so seeing it, call to mind what manner of persons they and theirs ought to be, in all holy conversation and godliness. Then will this heavy chastisement indeed fulfil its work; not joyous for the present though it be, but grievous, it may thus bring forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness in us who are exercised thereby.

His dominion shall be from sea to sea. It begins, as we have seen, at the sea of baptism; and what is that other sea, but the sea of glass which is before the throne? Or we may take it in yet a more blessed sense, the Red Sea of Martyrdom, through which the highest and greatest saints have been called to pass. But whether we or they,

whether ordinary Christians or elect martyrs, still it is one King Whom we serve. His dominion shall be from sea to sea. And so the Prophet repeats it, that in the mouth of two witnesses this word also may be established. His dominions shall be from the Sea of Baptism to the Sea of Glass, and from the Flood, wherein our sins were washed away, to the world's end ; yea, and beyond the world's end, even for ever and ever.

And now to GOD the FATHER, GOD the SON, and GOD the HOLY GHOST, be all honour and glory for ever. Amen.

VII.

CONFIRMATION.

“Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?”—*S. Matthew xv. 3.*

I KNOW not, my reverend brethren, that, on this occasion of our meeting, I can direct your thoughts to any subject more profitably than to that which, in our several spheres, is even now occupying us, and which will, for the next few weeks, engross a larger and a larger share of our time and attention—I mean, Confirmation. For if there be one doctrine in our Church more than another concerning which belief has become corrupted, and practice vicious,—in reference to which, professing ourselves to be wise, we have substituted a vain late human tradition for Scripture—in which we have made an intellectual process take place of the working of the SPIRIT of God—that is no doubt the doctrine of the laying on of hands. You shall see a parish Priest

labouring even beyond his powers to prepare the younger part of his flock for Confirmation—in season and out of season shall he be instant with them—and yet they shall be as ignorant of the nature of the rite as if it existed not.

How is Confirmation usually explained? Is it not defined to be the ratification, on the part of a baptised Christian, of his Baptismal vow?—the taking upon himself of those promises which his godfathers made for him at the font?—*his* confirmation of what he has previously done in the sight of God, and in the face of the congregation?

I think you will agree with me that this is a fair account of the teaching of those who profess to hold the views of the Church. They do not deny that we may expect to be benefited by the act; but simply because the choosing this day whom we shall serve, requires God's grace to assist us in doing it, and therefore we may look for His blessing upon it.

And yet is not such an account of Confirmation so utterly inadequate that we may boldly call it absolutely untrue? If I ask a man why our LORD came into this world, and he replies, To be an example of long-suffering under injuries; may I not assert that, though as *a* reason this may be true, as *the* reason it is really false?

And so of Confirmation. I appeal to the universal teaching of the Church whether this doctrine be anything more than a mere human fancy ; I appeal to the Bible whether it be not totally unscriptural ; I appeal to those who are so fond of dwelling on the insufficiency of man to merit eternal life, whether it be not to substitute our works for the HOLY GHOST's, to say that we confirm, instead of that He confirms ; and I appeal to all here present whether its reception has not engendered still farther corruptions, corruptions which every parish Priest knows to be infinitely hard of eradication ?

What is Confirmation ? It is a mystery, wherein the grace of the HOLY GHOST is given to baptised persons in fuller measure. The matter is, indifferently, the imposition of hands, or unction with oil ; the ordinary minister, in the Western Church, the Bishop : the form varies so extremely that no general rule can be laid down for its composition.

This is all that is of the essence of the Mystery. Every thing else connected with it is an unessential, though it may be a pious, addition to the original and Apostolic form.

But I shall be asked : Does not our own Ritual expressly allude to the ratification of the Baptismal

vow? Does it not even employ the word *confirming* with regard to it? Does it not therefore at the least sanction the view of the Confirmation being on our side—not on God's? Protestants will say—Yes; those who have left us for Rome will say—Yes; but notwithstanding all this, I think we may unhesitatingly answer—No.

When was it that the Introductory address—the question of the Bishop and the answer of the candidates—found their way into our book? Was it at the time that the Articles were drawn up? If so, taken in connection with the eighteenth article, wherein the plain and grammatical sense of words asserts Confirmation to be a corrupt following of the Apostles, there might be some ground for the assertions boldly advanced by no obscure Divine, that Confirmation was simply left in the Ritual as a compliance with the prejudices of those who had been accustomed to it in the older Church.

But, as it happens, these clauses were for the first time introduced in the last revision; that is, by men whom we know to have held the highest possible views of sacramental grace, to have been well versed in ancient rituals, and to have aimed at approximating to them. They could not possibly foresee that what they intended as a precise analogy with Baptism should be warped into ■

denial of the gifts of the HOLY GHOST, and be made the basis of semi-Pelagianism. They seem to have argued thus ; that, as in Baptism the grace of regeneration is freely, unreservedly, certainly, absolutely, given to infants, yet that nevertheless the Catholic Church has enjoined in ordinary cases the addition of sponsors, and the ceremony of a covenant entered into between them and God ; so in Confirmation, though the grace of strengthening is freely, unreservedly, certainly, absolutely given to such candidates as come with fitting disposition, (I leave the more abstruse inquiry as to those who receive the imposition of hands profanely) ; yet, nevertheless, the idea of a covenant might still profitably be carried out for the purpose of rendering the two offices yet more analogous. The very beginning of the exhortation proves this ; “ To the end that Confirmation may be ministered to the more edifying of such as shall receive it, the Church,” *i.e.* in England, “ hath thought good to order that none hereafter shall be confirmed, but such, &c.” That is, all these adjuncts, about saying the Creed, the Ten Commandments, and the Catechism : about ratifying the Baptismal covenant, and the like, are merely convenient and for our edification, are things which may be ordered or adopted as shall seem most convenient to the national Church.

So far therefore from proving that the Savoy Divines degraded Confirmation to the place which it now so frequently occupies, this exhortation (whether wisely added or not is a very different question) absolutely proves that they regarded it in the light of a Sacrament; or the ratification of the vow, instead of presenting an analogy with, would have been simply a parody on, Baptism.

We may learn from hence the great danger of any, even the most pious addition, to the primitive expression of the one faith. I do not say but that, often, such addition may, by its obvious profit, counterbalance such risk. Take, for example, the institution of sponsors. It was devised by that Catholic Church which cannot err, and therefore, even if we could not see, we are bound to believe, its advantages. But have we not learnt by sad proof that this addition to the original institution of the Sacrament has its risk as well as its profit? Have we not seen the conditional faith of the sponsors substituted for the unconditional promise of God? Have we not seen, in the late struggle between heresy and the Catholic Faith, in this land, that the surest argument for our Church was drawn, not from the developed office of Public, but from the even yet more primitive office of Private, Baptism?

And if this be true of the wise and godly additions of an Universal Church that is infallible, how much more of a National Church which can and may fall from the truth? We have innumerable instances that Provincial additions to Catholic formulæ have been attended with the worst consequences. Take the Coptic Church. Its office of confession prescribed that a lighted censer should be placed in the room, or the church, while the penitent was with the Priest. By degrees came in the corruption that the censer—not the Priest—was necessary to absolution; that private and auricular confession were equally salutary with it; that neither could avail to forgiveness without it. Hence, again, in the same Church, the unusually solemn consecration of Baptismal water introduced the horrible error that Baptism with common water was invalid; and hence, by a natural consequence, where the latter only can be procured, children are permitted to die unbaptised. In like manner, the Syro-Jacobite communion attaches great importance to the consecration of the Baptismal water by oil. In process of time it came to be believed that dying infants should only be signed in oil with the Cross, and not Baptised. And so in England. The Baptismal Covenant, itself a development, was still

further developed into a Confirmational Covenant, and the natural consequence we have seen. In short, the Primitive Doctrine was, that in Confirmation we *are confirmed*. The Anglican development of the Savoy conference, to give it in the words of one of the most energetic defenders of the English Church, was that we *confirm, and are confirmed*: and the Protestant corruption of that development is, that we simply and purely *confirm*.

That our Church itself has not fallen into that corruption, it is not necessary for me to prove to you. The very same revisers of our office, who unwittingly gave occasion to it, also added that form for Adult Baptism, wherein, after the baptised person has, in his own name, been entering into the Baptismal Covenant, the rubric is added, "*It is convenient that every person thus baptised should be confirmed as soon . . . as conveniently may be.*" To what end, if the ratification of the promises of his sponsors were all for which that rite was designed?

They who hold the Protestant view of this Mystery must allow, nay, are bound to provoke, an appeal to Scripture. Thither let us follow them. Was ever any thing more grossly unscriptural than their belief? They surely will not

tell us that the institution of godfathers and godmothers is of equal antiquity with the Canon of the New Testament. They surely will allow that, in that Canon, Confirmation is mentioned and practised. Forthwith out of their own mouths they are condemned. For how can that be *the* end of a rite, which in Apostolic times, could not possibly be even a casual adjunct to it?

Again, a favourite argument of other Protestant sects against Anabaptists is this:—the households of whom we read in the New Testament as having received Baptism undoubtedly contained infants. As these are not excepted, they are included. Infants therefore were then baptised.

We will turn to the mission of S. Philip to Samaria. “When they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of JESUS CHRIST, they were baptised, both men and women.” Now I say to the Protestant Pædobaptist—Does this include infants or not? If he says that it does not include them, all his Scriptural arguments fall to the ground, and the Anabaptist remains master of the field. For it would be absurd to suppose that, in so vital a matter, Apostolic practice varied; that in Samaria infants were not admitted, while in the house of Lydia and the gaoler they were admitted, to Baptism.

But the Pædobaptist will probably reply, that in the phrase “men and women,” infants also are included. If so, then by the same rule infants also were in Apostolic times, as well as in Primitive ages, confirmed: for no exception is made when we come to the subsequent missions of SS. Peter and John. They prayed for *them*—the HOLY GHOST was fallen upon none of *them*—only *they* were baptised—then laid they their hands on *them*. It were too barefaced to make the one clause include, and the corresponding phrase exclude, infants. We come then to this; that absolutely in the very first Confirmation of which a record exists, and that, administered so short a time after our LORD’s ascension, infants were confirmed. If so, what became of the ratification of Baptismal vows? Is not the making this the end and sum of Confirmation purely, absolutely, grossly, rankly, “unscriptural?” Yes, the Catholic is consistent; the Anabaptist is consistent, and believes himself to be scriptural: but the Protestant Pædobaptist, who denies the sacramental virtue of Confirmation, is necessarily inconsistent, and necessarily, one way or the other, unscriptural.

I leave him to explain, as best he may, the historical facts which we have just been considering; and equally difficult would he find the doctrinal

references to Confirmation with which the New Testament supplies us. He may tell us, if he can, how a simple ratification of vows binding before can be called, under the title of *the laying on of hands*, one of the principles of the doctrine of CHRIST: and, more particularly still, in what sense it can be denominated the being sealed with the HOLY GHOST unto the Day of Redemption.

And now if, leaving Scripture, we betake ourselves to Church history, is there a trace or shadow of the present system for fourteen hundred years after our LORD's Ascension? Is it not confessedly, a very modern practice that Confirmation should be conferred on children as contradistinguished from infants? Is it not absolutely certain that the Eastern Church, in now conferring Confirmation immediately after Baptism, is simply preserving the ancient practice? The use, as we have just seen, of the Apostles,—the use of S. Ignatius and S. Basil,—of S. Augustine and S. Gregory? With all our ignorance of ecclesiastical matters, we are not so ignorant as not to know that the deferring Confirmation from infancy to childhood is a very late Roman innovation: while its English procrastination to youth is a horrible and crying corruption, not, God be praised, of the Church, but of its

Bishops ; yes, and a corruption of which we bear the blame, because we might check them in it, and do not.

I need not now take up your time by proving that the West, till the beginning of the fifteenth century, agreed with the East, in—as the usual proceeding—conferring Confirmation on infants. The absence of its deferral is therefore about contemporary with the shameless sale of indulgences, and at least two centuries later than that of the denial of the chalice to all but the celebrant. And I may safely challenge any one single instance of Confirmation being given to an adult, otherwise than as Baptism might have been, to make good a gross neglect in youth. So we read of S. Peter of Tarentasia,—I refer to the passage because I have nowhere seen it quoted,—as a proof of his extraordinary zeal, that he was sedulous in confirming not only infants, but also adults, where the sacrament had not previously been bestowed. And yet it is this corruption of a corruption that Bishops who in their charges write about a pure Church,—this practice, diametrically opposed to Scripture, that they who talk of a Scriptural Church,—this practice in the teeth of Apostolic usage, that they who pride themselves on an Apostolic Church,—this practice ignored by all antiquity, that they who

babble of a Primitive Church,—this caricature of a Roman development that they who hug the title of a Protestant Church,—that they, I mean the Bishops of this land, support and uphold. Uphold? They increase it. From seven or eight, the age at which the Reformers fixed Confirmation, it has been brought down to fourteen or fifteen, and now some, even going further, fix the earliest limit at sixteen!

And now let us see what is the consequence of this abuse as respects ourselves; to which end it will be convenient, in the first place to inquire what reasons led to, and what advantages resulted from the Western system.

That the Roman system is a development on that of the primitive, and indeed mediæval, Church, none can deny. But much may be urged in its defence; many advantages are certainly attached to it; and, once introduced, we can scarcely wonder at its having extended itself over Europe. On the other hand, neither can it be denied that it concedes the whole Protestant principle with regard to Confirmation; that it degrades it from a sacrament to a rite,—at least such is its tendency and danger; and this, perhaps, is one of those changes which induce members of the Eastern Church to say, that they can see no difference between the principle of Romanism and of Protestantism.

In favour of the Latin system it would be urged, that it gives a child a double safeguard against sin. It is unwise, its defenders might say, to expend all the preservatives of the Church at once. As fresh dangers arise, fresh armour ought to be forthcoming; it is not well to have no reserve. Baptism is a child's infallible defence till he attains the age of reason. When new temptations are opening out upon him, then let him have new powers. "They go from strength to strength."

But to all this it may be replied, that, in fact, it makes Confirmation an intellectual instead of a spiritual process. It appeals to reason instead of faith: and, if the "spirit of Protestantism" means any thing, it means that. The same principle, rigidly carried out, leads to the Anabaptist heresy, and would infallibly involve it, were it not that men are kept back from so grievous an error by believing Baptism (even where they do not receive the full teaching of the Church on it) to be generally necessary to salvation.

The Latin system, then, of Confirmation, according to this view of the subject, is theoretically Protestant: but practically, the very early age at which that Sacrament is really administered, obviates any great likelihood of error in the matter. Our own Church, to come to matters more practical

to ourselves, seems to have left things at the Reformation in this respect as she found them. There is nothing to forbid Confirmation at the age of four or five. *Ye are to take care that this child be brought to the Bishop to be confirmed by him, so soon as he can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments in the vulgar tongue, and be further instructed in the Church Catechism set forth for that purpose.* Not a word here, you will observe, of being able to *say* the Catechism by heart; but only of having received some general instruction in it. And that is, I presume, a fair account of the progress that most children have made by the age of five years.

Now compare with this the actual conduct of our Bishops. (There *may be* more exceptions than one: but I only know of one who leaves the age of the candidates for Confirmation solely to the discretion of the parish Priest.) They refuse, as I said, to confirm, some under the age of sixteen, some under that of fifteen, some of fourteen.

Now, the first consideration is: that they are hereby absolutely breaking the strictest commands of the Prayer-book: and (a consideration which with them may have as much weight) the law of the land. The Prayer-book leaves them no option.

On a certain amount of theological knowledge being attained, then *Ye ARE to take this child to the Bishop, TO BE confirmed by him.* Thus the grace of Confirmation is one which it is not left to the relations to seek or not to seek, it is not left to the Bishop to bestow or not to bestow.

If it be said that the *further instruction* in the Catechism must be a sure test of knowledge, at all events it is a test with which the Bishop has nothing to do. It clearly is left in the hands of the parish Priest. If he chooses to require a degree of knowledge greater than that which the rubric plainly implies, it might be a more delicate question how to deal with his refusal. But a Bishop who, without any reference to knowledge, makes it a question of age, is manifestly amenable to the law ; as justly so as a parish Priest would be, who should insist on deferring Baptism till the child had attained a certain age.

Then I say, my reverend brethren, that we have sustained, and are still sustaining, a grievous wrong at the hands of our Bishops. They shut the channel which would convey the strengthening grace of the HOLY GHOST against those very persons who are at the very critical period which especially needs that grace. We see young boys forced to leave our schools for agricultural labours,

exposed to bad company, thrown into all manner of temptations, evil examples before their eyes, wicked words in their ears, and the Bishop tells us that, *when* they have been exposed to this state of things some years, *when* their minds have become inured to it, *when* Baptismal Purity is probably gone, *then*, forsooth, he will confirm the grace that ought to have preserved it! And take a darker picture: You train a girl up in your national school; while there, she seems, and probably is, all you could wish her to be—industrious, modest, well behaved, promising to be a good servant, and, in time, a good wife, and a good mother. This stage past, without the grace of Confirmation she goes home, or she goes into service. Here, exposed to many a temptation, she has just the same means of resistance, and no more, that she had, when, comparatively speaking, exposed to none. If she falls, doubtless her guilt will be her own; but will not her blood be required at the hand of her spiritual father in God, who might have strengthened her, and would not? To act as our Bishops do in this matter, and to talk of obedience to the Church, is an outrage on common sense; to talk of primitive times, an outrage on history; to talk of Scripturalness, an outrage on the Bible.

But we, my brethren, what can we do in this matter? Surely much. In the first place, at the approaching Confirmation, we can give notice to the Bishop of all the children of our parish, above the age of seven, fit to receive imposition of his hands, and call upon him to confirm them. If he refuse, it is not my office, nor would it be seemly at this time, to advise you in what way the laws of the Church should be vindicated. But we are bound no longer to overlook our rights, which are violated, and the rights of the laity, which are absolutely trampled under foot in this matter.

One remedy, however, and that a most important one, is in our hands. Having thus vainly called on the Bishop to confirm those who have a right to demand Confirmation at his hands, we can at least give him notice that, in that case, we shall avail ourselves of the second clause of the rubric, which enjoins that none shall be admitted to the Holy Communion till they be confirmed, *or ready and desirous to be confirmed*; and shall admit, as communicants, those whom we believe to be fit and proper recipients of that Holy Sacrament.

I might here dilate on the great injury which results from so long procrastinating first Communion: how often, by this means, it is received only, if then, on a death-bed: how often the Blessed

Sacrament is regarded, not with awe and reverence, but with a certain feeling of slavish and superstitious terror : how completely we lose the preparation for first Communion, which in other countries has such blessed results. All this arises, in great measure, from the procrastination of Confirmation, but need not necessarily arise from it. If the one sin is the Bishop's, the other, at least, is the Priest's. Do not let us make a great abuse, a great wrong, a great piece of tyranny, worse than it is. If our children are prohibited from the grace of Confirmation, and we have not the courage nor the means to vindicate that for them, at all events let us not shut them out from the reception of the Body and Blood of our LORD. That, at least, is in our own power : that, they may require at our hands, and none can forbid them.

I have endeavoured, then, to show that the Church of England, following the example of Rome, in deviating somewhat from the theory, and much from the practice, of primitive Confirmation, is not answerable for the abuse which her Bishops have introduced, it would appear, mainly in the eighteenth century.

This abuse seems to me to arise from three causes, which I will very briefly mention, and so conclude.

The first is, the additional trouble that earlier Confirmation involves.

As it is, the general rule for Confirmations makes them triennial. They have been,—perhaps in one instance they still are,—septennial. Now, to be administered at the most critical time of life, they must be annual. And so the consideration of trouble at once enters in.

The second is, the unhappy laxity of doctrine that has crept in among the Prelates themselves on the subject of Confirmation. If they look on that rite as the Confirmation of baptismal promises,—if they do not regard themselves as dispensers of the HOLY GHOST, why then, disguise the matter as you will, it really is a point of very small importance whether they lay their hands on a person's head or not. The imposition of hands becomes little more than a sham,—and this the imposers themselves must feel.

The third is closely connected with the second. If any Bishop doubts or disbelieves baptismal regeneration,—if, for example, any one holds, with the Primate—O awful thought!—that original sin may possibly be a bar to the right reception of Baptism, then he will naturally look on Confirmation, much as the Church regards penitence, as the plank after the shipwreck, and will wish to delay

it as long as may be. In fact, we know it well, so-called Evangelicalism looks on Confirmation as chiefly valuable on this account : that the examinations, and prayer, and meditations, which ought to precede it, are often the happy means of conversion. The baptismal vow has been broken ; well, then, say they, here is a second help. Take it upon yourselves, and begin life anew.

We, my brethren, have not so learned CHRIST. And though it be discouraging to lay again the foundations, as S. Paul speaks, whether of the doctrine of baptisms, or of laying on of hands, yet we must patiently bring forth out of our treasury things old as well as new. And the more the Catholic doctrine of Confirmation is disbelieved or attacked, the more ready must we be to exhort those committed to our charge not to grieve that HOLY SPIRIT of God, whereby, in Confirmation, they *have been* sealed (not, God forbid, sealed themselves) unto the Day of Redemption.

VIII.

IF YE KNOW.

“If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.”
S. John xiii. 17.*

“AND He said unto them, What things?” That question of our LORD’s is also that which you naturally ask on hearing this verse. And I might answer, as the Apostle did, “Concerning JESUS of Nazareth.” Indeed, now that we are come to the end of our Christmas season, I do not know that we could find many texts much more suitable to close that holy time.

“If ye know these things,” said our LORD : that is, as it just came before, The servant is not greater than his Lord : neither is he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If He then, as at this time, emptied Himself of His glory, and was found in the form of a servant and the likeness of

* A Sermon preached on the First Sunday after Epiphany, 1849.

men, it follows that we are, so far as in us lies, to follow the great example of His great humility.

So here, then, we have a blessedness proposed : “happy are ye.” But there are two doubts, whether we shall be able to attain to it : *if* ye know, and *if* ye do. As much as to tell us, that, after all, we may not know these things, and that, if we do know them, we may not do them.

If we know them ! you may say. Day by day we hear, and say of our LORD, that He was conceived by the HOLY GHOST, born of the Virgin Mary : Sunday by Sunday, that He was incarnate by the HOLY GHOST, of the Virgin Mary, and was made man : and twelve times a-year, we profess that He is Perfect GOD, and Perfect MAN, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting ; and are we at “ If ye know these things ” after all ?

We are indeed. Consider this. S. Paul himself, no such very long time before his most glorious martyrdom, was earnest in prayer that he “ might know Him.” If he who had been caught up into the third heaven—if he, the chosen Apostle of the Gentiles, could doubt whether he knew our LORD, how shall not we rather stand in fear, whether, after all our talking, all our hearing, we really know Him or not ? Know Him, that is, so as to realize who He is, and what He did ; where

He once was, in the manger—where He now sitteth, at the right hand of God. There is a knowledge of all this, as the wise man says, which only multiplieth bitterness : a head knowledge, which is no knowledge at all. This, I suppose, none of us but has. And yet, surely, to see the life and behaviour of many that call themselves Christians, we might doubt whether they had even so much as this. I could not but think this morning, when we were singing the Litany, that if one who had never heard of Christianity had come into the church, and had been desired to look about him, and then told what we were professing to do, he would scarcely have believed it. “What! these people, four-fifths of whom are sitting in the easiest and most comfortable postures they can find, speaking to Him Whom they call King of Kings, and LORD of Lords—calling to His memory what He did for their souls—of His bitter sufferings and death!—daring so to remind Him of these things, in postures in which they would not venture to address even a trivial remark to an earthly superior!” Might he not say this, and more? and is there not therefore great grounds for the “*If ye know them?*” And what, if we had followed each one now before me through the whole course of this last week’s life! What of them who profess to

believe in GOD the FATHER Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth—and who yet, over and over again, take that great and terrible name in vain: and in JESUS CHRIST His only SON our LORD,—and yet will not have this Man to reign over them: and that He was crucified—and yet will not crucify the flesh to its affections and lusts: dead—and yet will not die with Him: and buried—yet, though buried with Him in Baptism, lead lives like the beasts that perish: that the third day He rose again from the dead—yet will not rise with Him: that He ascended into Heaven—yet set their thoughts and affections on things on earth, not on things above: that from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead—yet make no preparation for that last fearful account:—shall we call this *knowing* these things? If they profess to believe in the HOLY GHOST, and yet dishonour his Temples, their bodies, by excess or uncleanness—in the Holy Catholic Church, and, for all the obedience they pay to its commands, might as well be heathens; in the Resurrection of the Body, and yet their members are servants of iniquity unto iniquity—and in the Life Everlasting, and yet all their thoughts are tied down to the present life—is this, again, to know the truth? Our LORD, in another place, tells you, “Ye shall know the truth, and the

truth shall make you free." If then we are not free, not struggling to be so, not becoming more and more so, we in no real sense know the truth : as it is written, " Therefore are my people gone into *captivity*, because they have no knowledge."

Observe, then, that this knowledge is most essential to us : before *all things* it is necessary that we hold the Catholic Faith ; and yet no blessing is here pronounced on it. He saith not, Happy are ye if ye know, and more happy if ye do ; but reserves all the happiness for the doers alone. Why, but because knowledge, as under existing circumstances, it is necessary to salvation, so it may only increase our damnation ? We may be the servants that knew the LORD's will, and did it not.

But let this double doubt once be answered satisfactorily :—let us know, and let us do ; let us at this time know and realize somewhat of the depth of our LORD's humiliation, and try, by the assistance of the HOLY GHOST, to imitate Him therein, and then, He Himself has said it, Happy are we.

Where notice, He saith not, Happy *shall ye be* ; but, Happy *are ye*. An hard saying, some may think. It needs no other answer than, " The LORD hath said it." Yet, lest we should have mistaken the meaning, in the mouth of two or

three witnesses let it be established. And first, S. James : “Blessed is the man that endureth unto the end ;” not Blessed shall he be when he has obtained the victory, but blessed while he is in the conflict ; yes, and because he is in the conflict. And, again, our LORD : “Blessed are ye when men shall revile you ;” not, Blessed only shall ye be when their revilings and persecutions are over for ever ; no, for He proceeds, Rejoice *in that day*, and leap for joy.

And these three examples of humility, willingly and cheerfully taking the lowest and the most despised place ; resisting, without peevishness or discontent, temptation that is sent upon us ; and enduring persecution for CHRIST’S sake,—of all these He left us an example that we should follow His steps. And see how our text comes in with its context : “The servant is not greater than His master, neither is He that *is sent* greater than He that *sent Him*.” “If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.”

Our Master, then, at this time, left us an example, when he humbled Himself for our sakes, how we also should humble ourselves for his. “I have left you an example that ye should do as I have done unto you.” Soon, very soon, we shall be called on to commemorate that second example,

endurance under temptations ; and that will lead us to the third and most sad of all, how when He was reviled, He reviled not again—when He suffered, He threatened not.

“ Happy are ye if ye do them.” Yes ; it may be that there are even now before me some who are, by the wiles or the might of Satan, pressed out of measure, above strength, so that they despair even of life. Yet they are happy so long as they resist, and in so far as they resist. They have the strength of the HOLY SPIRIT exerted in them ; they are following in the steps of Him they desire to follow : every victory they gain, as it is, in its faint measure, a resemblance, so also it has its origin in His one great victory. It may be that some among you have been privileged, during this last week, so to conquer—to conquer the open assaults of Satan, or your own corrupt hearts ; to make some effort which it once appeared you never could make ; to win some post from your great Enemy which once appeared impossible ; to establish a stricter watch over your own hearts ; to see something more of the greatness and number of your sins :—all these are but earnest of that great victory, when GOD shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly ; but offshoots, so to speak, of the victory of your LORD, when He, in vanquishing

three successive temptations, overthrew the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. If ye know that He went before you in enduring temptation, happy are ye if ye follow Him, as, like Him, enduring unto the end.

And are not they also happy, who, although they have fallen, yet have risen again? Are not they also, *in their measure*, like their LORD? Surely yes. Remember that it was a *blessing*; “Gad, a troop shall overcome him, but he shall overcome at the last.” If ye know these things,—that if any man sin, we have an Advocate; that whoso cometh unto Him, He will in nowise cast out; that the just man falleth seven times, and seven times *riseth again*,—happy are ye if ye do them; if, laying aside every weight, you run with patience the race; if you feel that the time past of your lives may suffice to have wrought the will of the flesh; if, with all your weakness, all your falls, all your wanderings, even so, and even yet, you turn to Him.

But happiest of all, for most like Him, are they who, knowing that He was reviled, mocked, and suffered, gird up the loins of their minds to do the same in their measure,—to drink of the cup that He drank of,—and with the Baptism He was baptized with, to be baptized. Some of us may

be called to do this : to bear ridicule, pity, it may be, unkindness ; to stand firm against the persuasions of friends ; to endure the charge of being righteous overmuch ; because they have set themselves in earnest to fight the good fight of faith, and to lay hold on Eternal Life. Earnestness ! that it is which the world hates ; that it is which the Prince of the Powers of the air will, if he can, put down. To serve God a little ; not to be openly irreligious,—nay, to be moderately religious, as the world goes,—to this it objects not—nay, it rather approves : but let a man act as though he loved the LORD his God with all his heart,—let him confess, by his deeds as well as his mouth, that he is a stranger and pilgrim upon earth,—let him fight, as the wise man speaks, to the death for the truth,—and then, If ye were of the world, the world would love his own.

The times of persecution by wild beasts and swords are over : the persecution of ridicule never, while this world remains what it is, can cease : and in one respect, perhaps, it is more perilous, in that it does not seem to be such a great thing to bear. If we were called on to face death or bonds, we are apt to think that the very greatness of the act would give us courage to face them. But to be laughed at—such a common, such an every-day

occurrence ! Can that be a persecution, like the persecution of Martyrs and Saints, like that of Him Who was the Martyr of Martyrs, and the Saint of Saints ? S. Paul teaches us differently. “ Others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings ;”—he puts the mockings before, as greater than, the scourgings ; and the Apostles themselves rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His Name, as if shame were a greater thing to bear than pain. This also our LORD bore, as what did He not bear ? and, doubtless, His cruel mocking was no small part of that Baptism wherewith it was necessary that He, for our sakes, should be baptized.

And, lastly, if we know that our LORD, as at this time, was manifested for us, happy are we if He is also manifested in us ! If in all our words and works we show not only that we have set the LORD always before us as our example, but that He is on our right hand as our strength. If His Grace is made perfect in our weakness, so that we can do all things through CHRIST Which strengtheneth us.

Ye know, says the Apostle, that He was manifested to take away our sins. How ? Strictly speaking, His *manifestation* took away sin by our thus having an example whereby to conquer it.

And this also is a very true sense ; though, doubtless, the Apostle there intended, by the word manifestation, the whole of His work in this world, from Bethlehem to the Mount of Olives ; and thereby set forth His one full and perfect sacrifice, which, in a much fuller meaning, took away sin, by destroying its power and its head. But, in whatever way we take it, the object of this manifestation, of this Epiphany, was the destruction of sin. If we know this, happy are we if we also do it ! If we destroy sin, firstly in ourselves, by crucifying the old man, and utterly abolishing the whole body of sin : but also in others ; herein, also, following the example of our Lord, who for this purpose, as the Apostle tells us in another place, was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil ; which of necessity must mean, the works of the devil in others. And this we do in two ways : by acting and suffering,—and both of them the Church sets before us, in the Collect for S. John Baptist's Day, when she prays that we may boldly rebuke vice, and patiently suffer for the truth's sake.

If only we have in any faint degree learnt these things, this will indeed have been a blessed Epiphany for us. And it will be the prelude of one still more blessed. “ Now we see through a glass

darkly," says S. Paul. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be," says S. John. Then we shall see the full glory of our LORD, shall know His full love, shall behold Him Himself—not dimly, and under figures, as here—but face to face, eye to eye, in our flesh shall we see GOD. Thus it comes to pass that Epiphany is, in one sense, the greatest Feast of the year. With Christmas Day we shall have done, when our LORD comes again, no longer in great humility, but in great majesty; with Easter Day we shall have done, when the dead in CHRIST shall rise first; with Ascension Day, when we are caught up together with Him in the clouds, and meet the LORD in the air; with Pentecost, when we enter into that Blessed Land where the fulness of the HOLY GHOST will be for ever and ever poured out upon us. But Heaven itself will only be the Epiphany of Eternity; for that which makes Heaven what it is, according to the teaching of the Church, is the Beatific Vision; and what is that but a full and everlasting Epiphany?

Which GOD vouchsafe to us all, for JESUS CHRIST's sake, to Whom, and to the FATHER, and the HOLY GHOST, be all honour and glory for ever. Amen.

IX.

OUGHT THE LAITY TO SIT IN
CONVOCATION ?*

IN every great reformation it is, in some sense, a comfort when difficulties multiply. While every thing yet remains to be done, it is surprising how easy the whole looks. A paper arrangement costs nothing but a little ink and a little time. But every line that was written off so hastily, or ran so easily on paper, may involve, before put in practice, long disputes, difficult accommodations, weary journeys, midnight labours, persecutions, sarcasms, falling off of friends, bitter opposition of enemies. And yet, in all this conflict and labour it is our consolation—Now we are really doing the work, now we have got beyond book-theories, now we are making way towards the end. While the ridge of mountains looks so calm and so soft, we know, not only that we have not begun to ascend it, but that we are far, far off.

* The substance of a paper read at a meeting of the South Church Union, July 31, 1851.

Therefore we must not be discouraged—therefore we ought rather to be gratified—with the difficulties that multiply around us, connected with Synods and Convocation. All these things are necessary. As to a vessel, now approaching the land, objects previously undistinguishable in the long line of coast become visible, and assume their comparative importance ; so to us, clearly not far from the re-establishment of Synods, difficulties necessarily connected with the subject, press themselves on our notice. That they always were there, if we had remembered it, we might have known ; and the only thing is to endeavour that, under God's Providence, the seeming evil may be turned into a real good.

There are many such : but at this time we will confine our attention to one—I mean, to the admission of the laity to a deliberative voice, whether in Synods or in Convocation.

All parties, I suppose, are agreed in one thing : that some change in the constitution of Convocation is necessary. Convocation such as it *was*, would in no sense now be a representative of the Church. It needs only a glance at its formation to convince us of that. For how is the Lower House composed ? Thus : of twenty-nine Deans, thirty representatives of Chapters, sixty-eight Archdeacons,

seventy Proctors for the parochial clergy. Now, the Deans and Chapters, as matters at present stand, are probably men as little acquainted with the real needs and working of the Church as are to be found among the whole body of English ecclesiastics. The necessity, the infallible approach, of any reformation will have been long visible to every other eye, before the faintest whisper of its possibility is breathed in the "College" or the "Close;" and yet these bodies return representatives, fewer only by eleven than those sent to Convocation by the fifteen thousand parish priests of England. Surely we shall agree that five or six times the number of Proctors possessed by the latter, would not give them a whit more than their legitimate influence in the Lower House. Surely, also, the rural Deans, men possessing, to a certain degree, what, in these unfortunate times, is so seldom possessed by any one man, the confidence both of Bishops and Priests, are well authorised to be heard in defence of their claims *ex officio* to seats.

Then, as to the method of election, (I do not now allude to such monstrous abuses as have occurred, Proctors electing themselves, or elected in the Archdeacon's drawing-room, or by a clique especially summoned—because against such it is in our power to guard, and such it is our fault if we

do not punish) the very principle of election would seem, if it is to furnish a true exponent of the parochial clergy, to need reformation. For instance, there seems no reason why curates, often more laborious than beneficed priests, often resident where they are non-resident, should not have a voice in the election of Proctors; whereas, under the old regime, rectors and vicars were alone, generally speaking, allowed a vote, to the exclusion from that privilege of even perpetual curates.

But these alterations are in detail only, not in principle. A change, involving, in the highest degree, principle, has also been proposed; and it is that to which we have now to direct our attention. A claim has been made that the laity should have a share in the government of the Church; and it has recently been promulgated by one of the Bishops, that the whole of his brethren are convinced of the necessity of this alteration.

Now, while we consider whether it is necessary, or advisable, or allowable, we must steadily bear in mind one point—Convocation only can reform itself. An unanimous decision of the Episcopal Bench is powerless in the matter. Convocation must meet unreformed. Then, if it chooses, it may make any alteration which it shall think desirable in its own constitution. To effect a change, even a beneficial

change, otherwise, either by a *fiat* of the Bishops, or by an Act of Parliament, would simply make the body that should be thus assembled a conventicle, and not a Convocation—a gathering of persons whom it would be a duty to disobey, and an act of schism to maintain. Some such arbitrary change, in which the Archbishop of Canterbury was to be sole reformer, we have seen proposed by a Swiss Protestant; we may judge, therefore, of what he considers likely to be its result.

Bearing, then, this fact in mind, let us see to what this proposed change really amounts. Few of its advocates, so far as I am aware, ever contemplate the laity sitting among the clergy, or having the initiative in any question. They would form a third and separate house, and only discuss matters already commenced in the other orders. One reformer, indeed—and the fact is worth considering, as a curious example of modern theology—contemplates a double house—bishops to occupy one, priests and laity another. But what a monstrous division, if a twofold division there were to be! It clearly makes a priest nearer akin to a layman than to a Bishop, whereas the merest student of theology knows how comparatively small is the difference between the first and second order of the Christian hierarchy,—how completely, in the highest powers

vouchsafed to man, that of absolution, And that of Consecration, they are equal.

Now, let us, in the first place, see what they can bring forward in the way of precedent. They confess that they have not much, but still they claim to have some. Mr. Massingberd, in his excellent tract on the Necessity of Convocation, has these remarks :—

“ If, indeed, such a course were contrary to all ecclesiastical precedent, that fact in itself ought, perhaps, to be conclusive against it. But such is not the case. Not only were lay deputies found in the synods of the Christians of S. Thomas, on the arrival of the Portuguese discoverers in India ; but in the old Gothic monarchy of Spain, we find ‘ Viri Illustres,’ some of whose names may yet be traced in old Spanish families, signing the acts of the Councils of Toledo. The same may be traced in Gregory of Tours, in the accounts he gives of the oldest councils under the Frankish monarchs. And it was the old Anglo-Saxon practice: ‘ Rex Ælfwoldus statuit diem Concilii, ad quem convenerunt omnes principes regionis tam ecclesiastici quam sæculares.’ [Concil. Calcuth. A.D. 785. Wilk. i. 146.] And to this record the names of several noble Saxons of both provinces are subscribed, following the names of bishops and clerks. Neander also informs us that a somewhat similar practice existed in the African Church, and quotes Purpurius, a Numidian Bishop, writing thus to Silvanus, Bishop of Cinta, ‘ Adhibete conclericos et *seniores plebis*, ecclesiasticos viros;’ and Optatus, ‘ Sine concilio *seniorum* nihil agebatur. Itaque et vos, quos scio omnem sapientiam coelestem et spiritualem habere, omni vestrâ virtute cognoscite, quæ sit dissensio hæc, et perducite ad pacem.”

I do not think that the above passage proves so much on our opponent's side as on our own. There is clearly a difficulty in bringing forward any shadow of precedent.

First, with respect to the Christians of S. Thomas. Whoever will read the acts of the Synod of Diamper, will be convinced that the Portuguese were so enormously mistaken in many respects regarding the native (and heretical) Church, that their testimony with regard to any practice observed in it is worth very little. I give such Prelates as Archbishop de Menezes, such historians as Gouvêa and Davila, the fullest credit of wishing to do what was right, and to speak what was true. But their ignorance of the language, their want of acquaintance with the rites of the Eastern Church, and their prejudices, frequently rendered them incapable of reporting facts as they were. Still, allowing that lay deputies did attend the Indian synods, and that that abnormal and heretical body could be any rule for us, this proves little. They, in all probability, simply attended for the same purpose, for which the presence of laymen was required in many of the mediæval councils. This was not "the old Anglo-Saxon custom" only, nor peculiar to the Gothic monarchy of Spain, nor to the Frankish sovereigns. As at Toledo, Metz, Tribur, and Frankfort, so at

Spalato, we find kings and chieftains signing the acts of the synod; but not as having had any voice in the deliberations which preceded the passing of those canons. Their signatures were simply attached,* as I think it has satisfactorily been proved, by way of adding to the dignity of the assembly, of expressing their respect for its decisions, and of sanctioning civil penalties against those who should transgress them. As to the African authority, it so clearly refers to Ecclesiastics, and employs the term *seniores plebis* in the sense of Presbyters, that the fact of its having been adduced shows only how very hard it is to find any approach to a precedent for what it is wished to establish.

Then, I think, we come to this: that the proposed admission of laity to deliberate and vote on doctrinal points, would be a complete innovation on the discipline of the Church; with the single exception (concerning which more presently) of the American communion. And we have seen an advocate of the measure professing that this "fact itself ought, perhaps, to be conclusive against it."

But it is urged that, granting precedent to be altogether against the admission of the laity into

* Farlati, *Illyricum Sacr.* iii. 87.

a synod, we are not archæologists, but churchmen. We are not so much occupied with the dead form, as with the living spirit. There may have been—there were—reasons in mediæval times, which made the exclusion right then, but which no longer exist; and one such reason, they say, was to be found in the vast gulf that then existed between the education of the clergy and of the laity. Now the education of both is on a par; the Priest is not necessarily better instructed than the Squire; the latter is as good a judge of what the Church needs as is the former, and, by consequence, should be as eligible to vote on her necessities and on their relief.

Now, if this argument were put in the form of a syllogism, I should deny major, minor, and consequence. I deny that the comparative ignorance of the laity was the cause of their exclusion from mediæval synods. If it were, I deny that this reason has ceased to be in force; and if both these assertions were granted, I should still deny that we have the power, on that account, to admit the laity to a deliberative voice on doctrinal matters.

It is not difficult to prove my first assertion, that the comparative ignorance of the laity was not the cause of their exclusion from mediæval synods. The whole teaching of the Church has

ever been, that to the Episcopate, and, as derived from that, in a certain degree to the Priesthood, belongs the right of deciding on doctrinal questions ; not in virtue of superior intellect, not in virtue of greater learning, but by reason of their character and their office. We see this from the very first. Constantly from Nicæa downwards, Bishops have taken their seats in the councils of the Church, venerable indeed for their piety and labours, but with no claim to a deep knowledge of theology. As constantly, eminent divines and canonists, whether Priests or laymen, have been summoned to assist, to explain, to point out latent heresy, to draw up definitions of faith. S. Athanasius at Nicæa, Gerson at Constance, are examples to the point. But never for a moment did these assessors and assistants arrogate to themselves a vote. They explained to others what they, above others, knew ; but there they left the matter. Having thrown all the light of their learning on the subject in question, they relinquished to the Bishops the final decision.

A similar proceeding is no novelty to ourselves. You shall often see the House of Lords requesting the opinion of the judges on a point of law ; these shall speak when requested, and shall speak with authority, but shall have no vote.

The reason, then, that in general and provincial councils others than Bishops did not vote, was not the comparative ignorance of those others, for their superior learning was often allowed, but the absence of that character which alone enabled them to decide doctrinal questions.

But now, secondly, is it true that the comparative *theological* knowledge of the laity—for other kinds of learning are out of our consideration here—is greater now with respect to the priesthood than it was in former times? That every layman now *thinks* himself qualified to discuss religious subjects is most true; other sciences are allowed to require some study; theology, it would seem, comes by nature. But the gross, self-confident ignorance so displayed is sometimes almost past belief. Take one striking instance. The judicial committee of the Privy Council are men, to say the least, of ordinary intellect and ordinary acquirements. They had, in a greater degree than most laymen, the habit of careful investigation and cautious decision. On the theological question brought before them, they probably expended as much time and as much care as the laity usually gives to any one religious difficulty; and yet, with all their care and all their caution, they display in their judgment a degree of ignorance which has

something in it perfectly audacious. Can we ever forget their explanation of that passage, "Who sanctifieth me and all the elect people of God?" Can we ever forget how, without the least apprehension that they were entering on one of the most difficult subjects in theology, they, completely verifying the adage concerning those who rush in where angels fear to tread, discussed and settled in a pleasant, gentlemanly, off-hand way, the question, Why the Church prays for that which God will assuredly, whether she prays for it or not, bestow?

Again, we constantly see in every-day life that, where a lawyer asserts a point to be decided in law, or where a physician lays down the doctrine of the profession on a case in medicine, those who are not members of the profession acquiesce, or at least do not venture to contradict. But let a Priest lay down the decision of the Church on some, the most elementary, point of casuistry or theology, and we immediately have, "I never can agree to that," or, "I must enter my decided protest against such a doctrine," or, "Of course these are points on which we must form our own judgments." So laymen will speak: and probably think that, by thus dissenting, they are showing their own knowledge on the debated subject; when, perhaps, simple ignorance

alone prevents their seeing that they are defending frightful immorality or hideous heresy.

This we must always remember—that it is not a general orthodoxy, it is not a love for the Church, that can make a man a theologian. The wish to possess a power often enough leads to the belief that the power is possessed; but a man is not a poet because he publishes verses—and a man is not a divine because he is fond of talking about religion. There is a particular danger at this time to those of the laity who hold true views of the faith. They necessarily have a smattering of the arguments which are to be used against the heresies of the day—and a smattering, we know it well enough, is the most dangerous kind of ignorance. Nay, we meet with persons who absolutely glory in having no more or deeper knowledge than this. We have lately heard a nobleman, (a friend to the Church too, to use an absurd phrase,) declare in the House of Lords, that the heresy which divines only could perceive was no heresy at all. Of course it would be just as wise to assert that the disease which only a physician could discover, was no disease at all; that the flaw in a title deed which escaped the eye of all but a lawyer, was no flaw at all.

I would be the last to deny that, as the laity seem to consider themselves, by virtue of an interest in

the Church, judges of theological questions, so the clergy have been, from time to time, far too willing to believe that, by reason of their priestly office, they have the right of intermeddling in purely secular affairs. Many a battle was lost in the Crusades, because Legates and Bishops dictated the plan of an attack, or the direction of a march. Many a State has had to deplore some piece of absurd policy, because Ecclesiastics, it may be well-meaning, but totally incompetent, have interfered in its Cabinet Councils. We see the same tendency even now. We see the parish clergy zealous supporters of this or that political party. We see them figuring on hustings, energetic on platforms, eloquent at dinners, influential in leagues. The laity may well be scandalized ; but they might, besides this, learn a moral—not to interfere in those spiritual affairs which are as much out of their province as temporal matters are out of ours.

Indeed, the very idea of a doctrinal question discussed in a lay house has something in it which, if any fit subject for ridicule, would be truly ridiculous. Probably three-fourths of the delegates would be men to whom the very words in which many doctrinal questions must necessarily be put, would convey no meaning whatever. For example, the following proposition, on a most important subject,

is presented for approbation or censure : “‘I see not that, in addition to the individual assistance of prevenient grace, and the general co-operation of God, another especial act of grace is necessary, in order that the free will may elicit an act of faith, hope, or contrition ; for these three appear to embrace one whole and sufficient cause of those effects. Wherefore, in cases where God denies any other especial assistance, the effect would follow from those forenamed alone.’ Is this proposition Catholic, Pelagian, Semi-Pelagian, or suspected of Semi-Pelagianism ?” Instances of this nature, only with regard to the Arian and Sabellian controversies, were discussed even in the times of Wake and Sherlock ; and much more would they abound in our age, which at all events pretends, and perhaps not with injustice, to an exacter theology.

But granting that the major and minor of the syllogism which we are considering were proved, still it would be a very serious question whether, in our isolated position, separated from the rest of the Catholic Church, its smallest and least venerable fragment, we have the power of making so important, so vital, a change in a matter which, like the constitution of Synods, may affect the very foundations of the faith ; whether we have any right to introduce another element of discord

into the unhappy controversies which embroil us with the east and the west. No mere prospect of advantage, of convenience, of utility, can justify such a step ; nothing but manifest necessity ; and necessity in this case will, I think, be pleaded by none.

But, say they, in all Synods of the Church there has always been a strong lay element. Undoubtedly. Œcumenical councils summoned by emperors—the interference of magistrates, as in the Synod of Chalcedon, and the second and third of Constantinople—the presence of the Frankish monarchs, the Capitulars of Charlemagne—all show the same thing. But will any one say, that there was ever so strong a lay element as in the present constitution of our Convocation ?

And that allowed, can it be wished to add to its strength ? In the first place, we have the Upper House entirely appointed by the Crown ; then, in the Lower House, nine and twenty Deans equally nominated by the Sovereign ; the Proctors of the Chapters, nominated by nominees of the Crown ; the Archdeacons, the same ; and only the delegates of the parochial clergy who have the free election of the Church. Is it not monstrous, after this, to talk of a fresh infusion of the lay element ? But even this is not all. On every decision to

which Convocation comes, the Sovereign has still a veto, the House of Commons has a veto, the House of Lords has a veto, the Sovereign has a second veto, and the Sovereign also has at any moment the right of prorogation.

No !—before the laity make any attempt to get themselves a place in Convocation, all interference of Parliament ought clearly to be given up. That is, if the legislature of the Church enacted any thing contrary to the law of the land, the actually existing courts of law would be a sufficient safeguard to the State; or, if in any matter further protection was required, Parliament would be ready enough to give it. Thus, the Church of England would be in no worse condition, so far, than Anglo-Romanists, Wesleyans, or other communions not established; and it would be in precisely the same condition as the Scotch Establishment, in that the Sovereign would still have a veto on its proceedings.

But there is, as I said, one precedent for the admission of laity, and this is to be found in the American Church. The canons which form the ground-work of the system, are the second and third of the Synod of Philadelphia, 1789. The second directs “That the Church in each diocese shall be entitled to be represented by one or more deputies, not exceeding four for the clergy,

and four for the laity, to be chosen by the Convocation of the diocese; the concurrence of both orders being necessary to constitute a vote of the Convocation." The third, "That whenever general Convocations are held, the Bishops, when there are three or more present, shall form a separate house, which shall have a negative on acts passed in the House of Deputies. When there are fewer than three Bishops present, those who are present shall be *ex officio* members of the Convocation, and shall vote with the clerical deputies, and a Bishop shall then preside."

And is it really wished to refer us for our model to canons, the clumsiness of which is, even at first sight, transparent—which clearly have for their model the regulations usually connected with meetings, platforms, chairmen, and resolutions—which were first sanctioned by that Convocation which refused even the permissive use of the Athanasian Creed? No; judged *à priori*, these American contrivances are the very last which we ought to wish ours; and, judged from their fruits, we may still more rejoice that at present we are in no wise committed to such a constitution. It is the laity, and they alone, who have hindered every attempt made for the restoration of one of the three creeds; it was, I believe, owing to their in-

fluence that the permissive alteration of the clause, "He descended into Hell," was also allowed.

But let these considerations have what force they may against the admission of the laity to a seat in the Synods of the English Church, it is clear that they tell, with an overpowering force, against the principle of lay delegates, until the restoration of some kind of discipline. Let a man only be a Communicant of the English Church—for I suppose that much would be insisted on by the wildest innovators, though in the model American Convocation it is not, I believe, necessary that the lay representatives should be baptized—and then, whatever belief, whatever negation of belief, he may hold, he may (if the new system, which God forbid! ever come in,) decide questions of discipline, and points of doctrine, and hold his head as high as the most venerable divine of the assembly. He may be an anti-sacramentalist, and abhor the Baptismal Service; he may be an Arian, and laugh at the Athanasian Creed; he may be a Rationalist, and consider all symbols of faith as the worn-out trappings of an effete religion; there is even no reason why he may not be an Atheist; only let him declare himself a Communicant, and his seat is safe. And who, in the present state of things, can excommunicate such an one? The Priest cannot, though he

would—the Bishop would not for the world, if he could. Again, there are few kinds of immorality which would hinder a lay delegate from taking his place in the representative assembly of the Church ; none, except such as can legally—morally will not do—justify a Priest in repelling him from the Communion, and procure the ratification of that repulsion.

But, say they, the electors must also be Communicants. I answer, grant it. It is indeed a thing which would never pass Parliament ; they who could not allow the friends of a school to insist on a Communicant master, certainly will never allow the restriction of a vote for delegates to Communicant electors. But, for the sake of the argument, I grant it. Do you not see, then, that you are thus introducing the old Test and Corporation principle ? “ Oh,” says ‘ one attached member of the Church of England,’ whose whole life is a long course of vice, “ so I am to have no vote unless I am a Communicant, am I not ? Very well, then *I will* communicate, and the sin, if there be any, be on their heads who exacted such a test.” That is what you must come to ; and the overflowing of ungodliness to which you thus open a door, it is fearful but to imagine.

True, the discipline of our Ecclesiastics is bad enough. But still, there is some. A Priest cannot

lead an openly, or indeed secretly, immoral life. A Priest cannot, with impunity, or at least cannot theoretically, preach any kind of heresy. The system may be unwieldy, blundering, paralysed; but there it is. Now, with regard to the laity, there it is not.

I confess that, if you make excommunication a real thing, if you can get back any portion of that godly discipline for which we have wished, once a year, since the Reformation; if, on the one hand, blasphemers, notorious evil livers, drunkards, adulterers, and such like, can be cast out of the Church, then you will do away with the greatest objection to the election of lay delegates to assist at the Convocation of the clergy. No reformation of discipline can ever render them fit judges of questions either immediately or mediately doctrinal; but yet the assistance which they can give would be useful in more ways than one—useful to the Church in whose service they exert themselves on matters coming really and properly within their own right and power of cognizance; useful to themselves, as giving them a more lively interest in that Church of which they feel themselves to be really and truly working members. Let us see, now, in conclusion, what are some of the matters in which lay assistance might be advantageously received.

Now, that there should be lay delegates from the

several dioceses, their powers and functions being first strictly defined, seems certainly tolerable, perhaps even desirable. They might have a voice in all, they might perhaps be solely intrusted with a large portion of, financial questions. They are better qualified for these discussions than the clergy; it lies more in their province; and the unhappy pecuniary quarrels which so often disgraced the middle ages would thus be avoided. In this class of subjects would enter the whole question of tithes, and their commutation—the consideration also of Church-rates—the appropriation of funds for any specific Church purpose, and the like. And as the Church, with a working legislature, gradually absorbed into herself those societies which are at present excrescences on her system, in the continued management of these the laity would also find a legitimate and most useful source of occupation. The question of education, for example—the mechanism and support of missions—the multiplication of parishes—the provision of and for priests—the preparation of tracts and treatises connected with the diffusion of sound and useful knowledge,—these things would probably be managed by committees, which would report to the whole Convocation; and in these committees laymen might render the most essential service.

And there are another class of questions, to the solution of which other laymen even than the delegates, must necessarily be called. Let us take three examples.

The Convocation might probably find it convenient to issue, as the Holy Governing Synod at S. Petersburg has lately done, plans and details for the erection of Churches. For this purpose it would of course employ the services of a mixed committee of architects and clergy. For the latter to go to work alone would be obviously absurd: while the former have not that theological knowledge without which their technical skill would not suffice; but both co-operating together, we should gain what neither singly can supply.

Again, there is a large class of questions for which a mixed commission of clergy and physicians would be called into action. For instance, the regulation of the obedience which priests owe to a coroner's record, in case of suicide, of *temporary derangement*. Difficult as the definition of duty in such circumstances may be, it is clear that the question cannot stand as it now does; and the more difficult the problem, the more necessary its solution. A curious instance of the want of some such legislative authority on medico-theological matters occurred not many years ago. It had been held in

the medical profession that, even in cases where such a course would be clearly beneficial to the mother and the infant, it was an immoral act to produce premature confinement. The question is as much concerned with theology as it is with medicine; and, in France, would undoubtedly have come before the Sorbonne. The consequence in England was, that a medical council was held on the subject, which reversed the previous practice, and laid down a permissive canon which is still in force.

Again, how many questions are there which would require the advice and assistance of lawyers! The immense subject of marriage—its impediments, its contraction, its dissolution; the whole collection of questions connected with wills, and especially the settlement of the law of mortmain, the administration of charitable trusts, the stipulations and arrangement of foundation deeds. Yes, there is work enough and to spare for all laymen who wish to serve the Church, without taking too much upon themselves by intruding into those questions of doctrine which are none of theirs to decide.

In the meantime, they and we are working to one end. A few more efforts now, and the Church will govern herself. The horizon has long been brightening, and one of the last streaks of light that herald the sun will doubtless have been the Synod of Exeter.

X.

FAMILY PRAYER.

AMONG the many subjects which the recent movement in our Church has placed in a new light, that of Family Prayer is not the least important. Adopted, I might almost say invented, in a careless age, as a means of preserving some faint symptoms of social religion throughout the week, a human invention that endeavoured to supply the lack of a Divine ordinance, we cannot wonder that it should have brought forth plentiful fruit, both for good and for evil. For good, because the will has been accepted for the deed, the hearty faith for the imperfect work; for evil, because it presupposed a sin, and was the substitution of a broken cistern for a living fountain.

The system of Family Prayer was, of course, originally intended to supply the want of the Daily Service; of that service which, under some form or other, every Church on earth, following the example of the Church in heaven, provides, theoretically at least, for her children; but which,

practically, has never been universal, never even general, in our own Church, since the Reformation. And so far it was well. Every thing which tends to prevent man from individualizing himself, every thing which binds him, be the degree of union greater or less, to those other mystical members of the same body, must be good for him. If he cannot join with the great congregation, it is better, at least, to unite with the small circle in which he lives and moves. The rich and poor meet together here also, and such a meeting is for the advantage of both.

But, in process of time, it came to pass that the substitute took, in the minds of most men, the place of that for which it was substituted. Family Religion became a principle and a watch-word. The idea began to prevail that, besides individual and public prayer, there was another kind of devotion for which the Church made no provision. Daily Service was very well where people had nothing else to do; but it did not make up for Family Prayer—it did not treat households as households—it did not particularize the relative duties of a tie with which it had no connexion. If one of the two must be given up, it must be the Public Office of the Church. And by degrees, some began to argue against Daily Service, because

it involved, or was at least a temptation to, the omission of Family Prayer. Curious proof of human inconsistency, that they who talk most strongly against the traditions of the Church should thus so completely have made the Word of God, pleading so strongly as it does for a public Daily Service, at all times and in all places, of none effect by their own tradition—a tradition, as we shall presently see, derived from an antiquity of less than a hundred and fifty years! That they who write most vehemently about the popery of an altar in church, should be the first to speak of assembling round a family altar at home!

The advocates of this system are ever fond of appealing “to the law and to the testimony.” Let us take them there. Surely, to use their own argument, if Family Prayer be of vital importance, as they make it, we must find something about it in Scripture. And, let it be remarked, I now speak not of that Family Prayer which only professes to be a make-shift for something better, where that something better cannot be had, but of that which glories in its own exclusive usefulness, which professes to supply a want that would else be unsupplied; that claims a Divine authority, and elbows out Daily Service.

Texts are quoted in defence of this system, it is

true ; the commandments given to the Jews to teach the Law of God diligently to their children : “ When thou walkest by the way, and when thou sittest down, and when thou risest up ; ” the declaration of Joshua, “ As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD,” and the like. One can only say again, alas for the inconsistency of human nature ! They who would laugh to scorn such deductions as the preservation of the see of Rome from heresy, because the faith of Peter was not to fail—or the duty of confession, because S. James commands us to confess our faults one to another—or the ever-virginity of S. Mary, from that prophecy of Ezekiel, “ This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, because the LORD, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut ; ” these very men make deductions of their own, compared with which, those which they revile as fanciful are mathematical certainties. What has the command to ancient Israel to bring up its children in the nurture and admonition of the LORD to do with a permission to forsake the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is ? What has the resolution of Joshua that, in the midst of an idolatrous generation, he and his house would serve the LORD, to do with a resolution on our part, that, in the midst of

a Christian people, we and our houses will *not* serve the LORD in the Daily Services of His Church? So Scripture is tortured—so scripturalists allow to themselves the right of that contortion and suppression, the least fancied approach to which they condemn, in others, as Antichristian.

Nevertheless, there is one example which, I think, may be adduced as bearing on the subject. We read of one who, at a time of great spiritual destitution, when every man did that which was right in his own eyes, resolved on carrying out a plan of Family Religion; and, for that purpose, “wholly dedicated” eleven hundred shekels of silver, truly no small sum, “unto the LORD.” True, it involved the disregard of the command to worship at Jerusalem; but still, the authors of the plan were well persuaded that they were pleasing God, even when a member of their own family was appointed to conduct their worship. And afterwards, when a Levite was procured for that purpose, “Now,” said Micah, “I know that the LORD will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest.” There is a good deal in this which resembles the present system. Micah’s mother was evidently actuated by a good intention; she carried it out at considerable self-sacrifice; she clearly wished for more frequent opportunities of

worship, and that with less trouble, than the going up to Jerusalem afforded and involved.

And, in the New Testament, it is remarkable how opposed the whole proceedings of the Apostles are to any such idea of Family Religion. The very expression, "the Church in thy house," cuts it up by the root. It proves that even then, when public worship was impossible, still Family Religion, as such, was out of the question. It shows that, from the first, the Christian who had the house best suited to the purpose, set apart some part of it for the worship of his brethren. There the Holy Mysteries were celebrated; there the prayers of the Church were offered up; thence the martyrs and confessors were dragged to prison and to judgment. The Church in the house is opposed enough to the Family Altar.

No; it was not the "Scripturalness" of the new system which made it popular; though there are other reasons why it should become so. In the first place, though doubtless its supporters are often most ignorant that they yield to the influence of such a suggestion, it is shorter; then, it is easier; it does not involve a breaking in upon the morning; it can be fixed so as to accommodate family hours, whereas family hours, where the Daily Service is attended, must bend to the con-

venience of the parish, or the discretion of the Priest. Then, it allows a latitude of extempore prayer, and extempore exposition; it can be shortened as necessity or convenience demands; and it is performed, which in theory seems nothing, but in practice is a great deal, without the trouble of going out.

From these, and other features, numerous collateral evils have arisen. The sanctity attaching to the church, as a church, has been almost totally forgotten; for, for two services celebrated in the House of God, fourteen were performed in the house of man. The office of a Priest has been lost sight of; for, morning and evening, it has been, in most cases, a layman that led the prayers of the family. And this household spirit has extended itself to our churches, and in many instances produced, and in more defended, pews.

In looking back to the origin of Family Prayer in England, we see at once that, till the Reformation, the offices of the Church were daily accessible to all. In the time of Edward VI. there was doubtless a faint endeavour, on the part of the Reformed Service, to maintain itself in daily village use. And during the reign of Elizabeth, and downwards to the great Rebellion, it did, as matter of fact, retain possession of the principal Churches

in cities and towns. But that was all. We must not suffer ourselves to be deceived in this matter. It may serve to ornament fictions, a representation of Daily Service as then universal; but is clear, from innumerable testimonies, that never was it then so general as it is now; never were there anything like the seven hundred Churches wherein at present it is offered up. But we must, to make the parallel correct, take into consideration the altered condition of the country, and the absence of a middle class. England, at least in its rural parts, was pretty much divided between the very poor and the lord of the manor; and the latter, in most cases, had his chaplain, and, in many, his private chapel. But chaplains and Family Prayer are almost incapable of co-existing—one must destroy the other. For even in the great Rebellion, among the Presbyterians at least, if we may judge from the memoirs of the time, where there was no chaplain, neither was there any “exercise.” And if we return to the reign of Elizabeth, the middle class, such as it was, in her time, without being of importance enough to support a chaplain, were yet free enough from galling everyday labour, to have opportunity for social worship; and it provided for them (as we have seen) in the churches of those towns in which, as a class, they

almost totally existed. Family Prayer, then, in the sense now usually affixed to that expression, seems to have been unknown in England at the Restoration, except among the Independents.

And, during the reign of Charles II., it could hardly obtain a footing. Men who had no other religion—the Rochesters, the Sedleys, the Gramonts—had religion enough to mock at any unauthorized and puritanical form of worship. The excessive strictness of the laws against non-conformists operated against the frequency, almost against the very existence, of Family Prayer; and the Daily Services in towns, and the chaplains, in however degraded a state, of noblemen and gentlemen, tended to the same end.

But, with the accession of William, a new era opened. Scoffers were discouraged in high places. Penal laws were abrogated. A certain sort of morality was considered decent. But the very idea of the Church was (except among the Non-jurors, and the elder part of the clergy, such as principally formed the Lower House of Convocation) gradually effaced. Daily Services ceased, chaplains were discarded as unnecessary, the middle class rapidly increased in numbers and influence; and all these things favoured the development of a system of Family devotion. But

yet it did not at once come in. In the time of King Charles II., we find Thoresby, the Leeds antiquary, (though so much a Puritan at heart, as to dislike the Cathedral Service,) attending his parish Church twice or thrice a-day, and (apparently) quite unconscious of the possibility of Family Prayer. In the time of George II., we find Sir Charles Grandison represented as entertaining a chaplain indeed, but neither attending the Church Prayers abroad, nor having them said in his own house. But a change was at hand.

For, in like manner as, at the same time, because the Church would not herself be the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Lands, and for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge in her own, distinct associations arose within her pale for these objects; so, because she would not provide her children with the Daily Service, her children provided themselves with the best imitation of it that they could invent. Men like Patrick and Gibson promoted the half-measure as better than nothing; men like Tillotson and Burnet welcomed it as a fresh step towards a "liberal comprehension;" men like Bull must have desired to rejoin, in a better place, the companions and friends of their youth.

In the "Evangelical" movement of the middle

of the last century, Family Devotion began to assume a prominent place. How completely it was intended to supersede Daily Service, the life of Henry Venn (the best, doubtless, of the leaders of the movement) amply proves. If his servants were guilty of a fault, he used, after a fashion, to excommunicate them, by forbidding them to come in to prayers. To his Family Prayers the poor of his parish were welcome. Half-an-hour he spent in private devotion in his own Church, (but though it stood close to his parsonage) he never threw it open to his people, except for a weekly lecture. Again; we all know what influence has been predominant, for the last few years, in the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge. Look through their tracts, you will find the duty of Family Prayer asserted again and again; that of attending Daily Service, where practicable, scarcely once hinted. Consider, again, the American Church; protestantized, till hardly a vestige of its Divine origin is left. In its Prayer-Book we have an awkward form for Family Morning and Evening Prayer.

To look now practically at this question. We find, at the present time, Family Prayer in use among a large portion of professing Churchmen. Its absence is considered by all parties as a proof

of but small care or zeal for religion. Daily Service is here and there springing up, rapidly indeed, but still is the rare exception; seven hundred out of fifteen thousand churches is a lamentable minority. In what way are we to reconcile these symptoms of returning health with the stay and the prop of long sickness? If Daily Service ever become general, will Family Prayer cease? If it will, how is it to be performed, in what light is it to be regarded, till that time shall come?

Now, this question involves a previous inquiry which I have never seen discussed; but which yet, taken in connection with the subject of Daily Service, is most important. It is this: What is the theory of the Church of England with regard to the obligation that lies on her lay members to attend her offices? As it is, in these days when there is no king in Israel, every man does that which is right in his own eyes, and makes his own theory on the point. There is, first, that of the careless, respectable, well-to-do man of the world; he comes to the conclusion that it is proper to attend Church once on the Sunday; very probably he may not do it himself—he is too busy, or he is too idle—but, still, he would confess, “I know I ought to do it, but the service is so long,” or, “but my hands are

so full," or, "but I have a friend with me," or, "but I really want a little rest." He would at all events confess that it was very right and proper for others to go; he would be more than contented that his wife and children should attend; in fact, whether his practice or not, that is his theory. That, too, is for the most part, the theory of our aristocracy, who go on Sunday morning to set a good example to their tenants, when in the country; and, when in London, not to be behind the rest of the world in devotion; they do not wish to be more religious, but neither do they care to be more irreligious, than their neighbours.

Then there is the theory, which is that of most parish priests—that a man is bound to attend service twice on the Sunday. If he does at other times, so much the better; but he cannot fail in this without sin. Correlatively, the priest may perform or not other services, but the "double Sunday duty" is the obligation. Hence, the great majority of Churches throughout the country have two Sunday Services, and two Sunday Services only.

The Evangelical theory would add to the above every occasion on which a sermon is preached, more especially the stated lectures—Wednesday, or Thursday, or Friday evenings, as the case may be. These also are services which, without a reason of necessity,

it is a sin not to attend. And the above three theories, between them, are held by probably nineteen-twentieths of professing Churchmen.

But there is yet another, which has, indeed, but very few adherents, and themselves a class rapidly dying out—I mean that which regards Wednesday and Friday, and also Saints' days, as *Prayer days*. This is recognised by the statutes of such of our post-Reformation hospitals as do not enjoin Daily Service. It is recognised by the practice of most of our towns, where those days are still observed. And it is held with a strong tradition, by the few and decreasing representatives of the old high Church party—the party of Sanderson, of Isaac Walton, of Nelson. One shall see the elderly maiden lady, the retired tradesman, the superannuated priest, attend these services, in the country town church, day after day, and year after year. One shall see, on the one hand, an Evangelical minister introduce, additionally, a Thursday evening lecture, or, on the other, a more faithful priest establish Daily Services. But on Prayer Days the old Church party went before, and on Prayer Days, and nothing else, they continue to go now.

And, lastly, there is the theory which makes attendance, morning and evening, on Daily Service, except in case of necessity, of obligation. Perhaps

few would assert this in so many words, but many speak and act as if, nevertheless, it were their belief. You shall hear the parish priest lament the thinness of his daily attendance, as if it were a sin, on the part of his disengaged parishioners, to be absent; and what is this but to make such an attendance of obligation?

Now, the question is: Which of all these is the theory of the Church of England, or has she any theory on the subject? What is the minimum of attendance which she requires? Is every man to do what seems good in his own eyes, or is there a certain quantum of attendance with which she is satisfied, and with less than which she is not satisfied?

It is a point which ought to be settled, and that by the only competent authority—Convocation. “The Church expects you to do this; here is the law, chapter and verse. I am not speaking from my own fancy;” to be able to say so, would prodigiously strengthen the hands of many a parish minister. In the mean time, it seems to me that the Church of England intended her Morning Service, *so far as it is a thing to be attended*, to take the place that Mass had previously held; that is, she would make it necessary to assist at that on Sundays and holy days of obligation. Of course

the whole tenor of the Prayer Book shows that she invites and expects her children to much more frequent attendance ; but I do not see where, or in what words, explicit, or implied, she commands it. Acts of Parliament, and regulations, more political than religious, cannot be taken into consideration. And we must remember, that she cannot reasonably expect, and we must not look for, the same daily attendance which the Roman Church wishes. A low Mass scarcely takes a quarter of an hour ; and whether a man once a-day spends a quarter of an hour, or whether he twice a-day spends half an hour, in Church, makes the widest possible difference.

And now, to return to the subject with which we set out. The question of Family Prayer naturally resolves itself into the two cases : Where there is, and where there is not, Daily Service.

Firstly, where there is Daily Service. And here it is either made a substitute for, or additional to, that. Now, where it is a substitute, I know very well how many excuses are urged for its retention : “ I would have both if I could, but I cannot give up family religion ; ” “ I should much prefer attendance at Church, but I cannot possibly send all my family, and it is better that the whole should unite in some form of prayer, than that one or two should go to

Church, and the rest remain without any office of devotion." Notwithstanding all this, and putting out of consideration those exceptional cases, which must always occur, I do not see how we can come to any other conclusion than this: that such substitute is no other than a mischievous sham. "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice." Grace is promised to the one kind of worship, grace is not promised to the other; not promised, I mean, to it as an ordinance of religion. If a family, as a family, forsakes the House of God for an unauthorised service at home, it seems to run near to the deserving of that sentence: "In vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

But, doubtless, where Family Prayer is additional to the Daily Service of the Church, then, of course, the matter is wholly changed. What is exceedingly pernicious as a substitute, may be highly valuable as an adjunct. The only question that remains is, what form such devotions are to take?

And here, surely, we cannot be long in doubt. Morning and Evening Prayers in that case occupy the place of Prime and Compline, and the nearer we can revert to that form the better. Those services come down to us with the antiquity and the blessing of some fourteen hundred years. They have been weighed in the balances, and not been found

wanting. They have, so far as they were intended, supplied all the needs of the Church; and we, in the nineteenth century of her existence, are not about to be exposed to new temptations, nor to be distressed by new necessities. That which has served the turn of confessors and saints, of monarchs and peasants, of priests and laity, may surely serve ours. We should rejoice to unite ourselves with them in words, as we are united with them in what were once their wants. Our necessities do not vary with every day of the week, or of the month, as one has so-called courses of Family Prayers for those spaces of time. We can well be content with the same unvarying collects, and at Compline with the same unvarying service throughout. Its very immutability is a rest, when the mind needs rest. It points out to us, as old symbolists teach, that unchangeable service of God which shall be when the burden and heat of this world's day are over, and "His servants shall serve Him, and they shall see His Face, and His Name shall be in their foreheads."

And, lastly, there is the case in which there is no Daily Service. Then, indeed, Family Prayer becomes a duty; and then, indeed, it will become a privilege, in proportion as it clings to the type of that for which it is an involuntary substitute, in proportion as it unites itself, in spirit and in

words, with the Church's more fortunate children, who can feed in greener pastures, and lie down by stiller waters. Thus it will not pride itself on its own excellence, on its own adaptation to family wants, but will be content to wait quietly for the time when the Daily Sacrifice, in its inferior sense, shall be restored, and long for that, its more blessed, restoration, when the Lord's Death shall perpetually and unceasingly be set forth till His Coming again.

XI.

THE LAUDIAN REFORMATION COMPARED
WITH THAT OF THE NINETEENTH CEN-
TURY.

SOME men seem to find a pleasure in discouraging themselves. They take the blessing pronounced on "him that feareth alway" in a sense in which the God of all consolation never spoke it. They injure their own powers of serving the cause in which they are engaged, they disjoint and disquiet their brethren, and, unintentionally, play the part of a dangerous enemy. Sometimes it is: "Behold that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone walls." And then we must call to mind, "Thus saith the LORD of Hosts: Because it is little in your eyes, should it also be little in Mine eyes, saith the LORD of Hosts?" Sometimes it is: "The foundations will be cast down, and what hath the righteous done?" And then we must take up the Psalm, "The LORD is in His holy Temple, the LORD's seat is in Heaven." This

scheme has failed, and that plan gone wrong, and this support is withdrawn, and that man is a traitor, and there is so much feebleness, and weakness, and weariness, and mistrust, and suspicion within, and such overwhelming tyranny and deceit, envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness without, that "all hope that we can be saved is now taken away."

I am neither about to dwell on the fearful sin of such despondency, nor to dilate on the general causes alleged for it; I rather wish to direct your attention to one argument frequently brought forward against the hopefulness of our present condition in the English Church. Carelessly considered, it is discouraging enough; thoroughly investigated, I know few things of better omen.

It is this: The battle in which we are now engaged is not new. It has been fought all over before. The Laudian Reformation shook the Church to its base; it tried, as for very life, to Catholicise it at once, and for ever. All was done that could be done; and it failed. We are not better than our fathers. We have even greater difficulties than they. Try as we may, the issue will be the same. Doctrine and discipline will relapse into their old, and worse than their old, place. Then an unnatural stagnation will succeed to an

unnatural excitement. Another century of sleep, then a third Reformation. And so on, progress alternating with recession, till God Himself shall, if ever in this world, make bare His holy Arm, and cause all the ends of the earth to acknowledge the salvation of the LORD.

Now, before we admit so depressing an argument, we must ask first one little question: *Was* the Laudian Reformation like that of our own days? I say, unhesitatingly, *Not in the least*. It is remarkable that two attempts to Catholicise the English Church can be so different. One should *à priori* have thought, that out of all the circumstances which attended each, some must of necessity have been similar. That the two should, whether in essentials, or in adjuncts, have steered so entirely clear of each other, is a fact which has never yet received sufficient attention. Let us, as briefly as we can, examine some of the great essential differences of the two.

I. It has always been an acknowledged characteristic of all great revolutions, whether for good or for ill, that they have commenced from below, and worked their way upwards. From the very beginning God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the wise. And, on the contrary, every reformation, urged on by the upper classes of

society, and penetrating from them to the lower, has always been a failure. Look in the Old Testament, at those of Hezekiah and Josiah. They took no root in the land, they merely lasted the lifetime of the princes who set them on foot, and died out at their death. Go to mediæval history, and study the reformation of S. Gregory VII. He, with wonderful courage and skill, kept it alive while he lived ; but no sooner were his last words breathed out, "I have loved righteousness and hated iniquity, and therefore I die in exile," than things began to revert to their former course. But reformations that have stood and become great, how differently have they commenced ! They have never been set on foot by the great of this world. Their authors have been men obscure till their own work made them famous. Such was the reformation of the thirteenth century, which poured an army of friars into those dark corners of Satan's dominions which the ordinary ministrations of the Church could not reach. Such was the rise of the most wonderful society that modern times have seen, or perhaps that the world ever knew. So, again, the Lutheran movement rose among the masses of the people ; and found its appropriate organ in the bold, excitable, eloquent, jovial, boon companion, whose name it has written in the history of the

world. So also the great French Revolution, brooded over by that *canaille* who so terribly avenged their designation, their own creation, their own representation, changed the whole face of Europe and the annals of civilized nations.

The fact, then, of its coming from below and extending upwards, is no criterion of the excellence or the perniciousness of a so-called reformation, simply of its stability. Take this test to the two cases before us. In the time of Laud we find King and judges, archbishop and the majority of his suffragans, deans and archdeacons, and other dignitaries, pressing forward the work. We find the clergy urged on by them, supporting it. We find the laity either apathetic to, or opposing, it. It began amidst the temporal and spiritual powers of the land. They, so to speak, drove it on—they did all that they could to ensure its success; and when they could do so no more, they died, or suffered for its sake. But they left no disciples. They founded no school. Their work, to a great extent, died out with them.

In our own days we have seen a movement, on a far larger scale, take its rise, not among Bishops and dignitaries, but among the younger Priests and the laity. We have seen it first regarded with a stupid astonishment, then suspected, then discouraged, then reviled, then openly persecuted by

those in high places. We have seen it increasing by loss, encouraged by suffering, sprouting forth after lopping, puzzling statesmen, harassing dignitaries, and finding its supernatural character so far recognised by its opponents, as to be named by them the masterpiece of Satan. It answers, it wonderfully answers, the two sayings of our LORD, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation;" and again, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth." Now, in Laud's time, the kingdom of God came *with* observation. It was to be promoted by Acts of Parliament, and edicts of the Star-chamber; it was to be set forward by magistrates on the bench, and proclaimed by officials at the market-cross; when it advanced, one could tell the reason why, one saw the whole train of causes and consequences; the arm of flesh was pretty plainly visible; the weapons of its warfare were carnal. But the spread of the present movement is indeed a mystery; it propagates itself according to no known principles; it breaks out where it can least be expected. "There is a marked tendency to these views," says one of their opponents, "among the younger branches of our religious families who have been trained from youth in the fear of God

and the pure doctrines of CHRIST's gospel." Of course there is. This neither is, nor can be, the work of any human hand. "The help that is done upon earth, He doeth it Himself." There was nothing like this in the days of Laud. And this extraordinary and unaccountable increase has always been the chief mark of the working of the HOLY GHOST. Heresy is only propagated by contact. In Arian or Nestorian times we find, indeed, members of Catholic families beguiled from the truth by argument, or persuasion, by a powerful sermon, or an energetic friend. But we do not find Arian or Nestorian thoughts springing up spontaneously in their hearts, and perverting their forms of faith. Now, on the contrary, we do find principles taken up by those who never heard them but from the mouth of enemies, who have listened to them under all the disadvantages of prejudice and early association, who have accepted them almost before they knew that others held them, and have professed them in spite of opposition, unkindness, parental suspicion, and domestic unhappiness. "This is the LORD's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes."

II. Another thing which distinguishes the two epochs is, that the world is against us, and was with Laud. I do not say this to depreciate what he did; it was the fault of the times, not his own.

But facts cannot be altered. The world liked the apparent laxity of the English Church ; the world liked the Book of Sports ; the world liked the revels of the cavaliers ; the world thought it a gentlemanly thing to keep Christmas and Easter ; the world thought it a very mean and poor-spirited affair to scruple at healths, to condemn Christmas festivities, to refuse the fashions of the times. So the world thought it proper to be High Church for the season. On the contrary, as little can anybody deny that, with all their follies, all their absurdities, all the hypocrisy that tainted them, all the political feeling which led them, the Puritans brought to the contest a true deep principle, often misapplied, often exaggerated ; but deep enough to die for, and true enough for awhile to conquer.

But how is it with us as regards the world ! There can, thank God, be but one answer to that question. The world hates us, despises us, reviles us ; the world is perfectly willing to fraternize for the nonce with every form of religion that may oppose us ; the world fears our success, and willingly employs any engine that gives promise of overthrowing it ; nor, which is very remarkable, are we opposed by any deep, stern, true religious feeling, as Laud was. The Evangelicalism of modern times is the mere echo of the last century. Time

was that, as containing a truth, a great vital truth, and proclaiming it in season and out of season, it was itself the terror and scorn of the world. Its earlier leaders felt this verity, that the easy, doing nothing, selfish worldliness of their age, could not get a man to heaven. They saw that something beyond this was wanted. They knew that this could in no sense be called living unto the LORD. They taught that there must be an inner Christian life, which could only be at first implanted, and afterwards kept up by the HOLY GHOST. They saw, and they said, that those who thought themselves to be rich, and increased with goods, and to have need of nothing, were, indeed, wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. This enraged the world, and the preachers of the new doctrine were reviled and spoken all evil of, and that, so far as the world was concerned, for CHRIST'S sake. It is true, that often with little powers of reasoning, and always without pretensions to theology, those teachers fell deeper and deeper into heresy. But it was for their religion, not for their heresy, that the world hated them.

And now mark the result. When a new and a truer school is, by God's grace, making way amongst us, this very Evangelicalism, and this very world, make peace, that they may turn their united

arms against us. The two parties compliment each other; the one gives wealth and dignity, the other relaxes its principles; and an alliance, from which, thirty years ago, both sides would have recoiled, is cemented by a common enemy and a common persecution. In the mean time, all that remained earnest in the Evangelical party is coming over to us—the husks stay, when the wheat is gone, and the dross remains, when the gold is extracted. Was there, in the Laudian movement, any approximation to this? The truer and more real that it became, did it not find the Puritans more exasperated in submitting to it, or more earnest in opposing it? Did it recruit its ranks from the best of its opponents? Did they fly to the world for assistance in opposing its triumphs? Did not they hate it the more, because it was mixed up with the world, and because, as they thought, it was of the world?

III. On looking back to the Caroline reformation, one cannot but feel a certain want of reality that pervaded the whole. Doubtless there was much more of earnest life than that of which we read. But still, that a great part of the movement consisted in externals, it would be difficult to deny. A Bishop celebrated in a cope—it was a point worthy of being chronicled. A Priest made

obedience to the altar—the Church party were exceedingly edified. In fact, it was æsthetics that gave a general tone to the reformation; other and weightier matters were not forgotten; but neither were they prominent. On the other hand, among ourselves, ritual is undoubtedly behindhand in comparison of those things which give ritual its value. Sermons, coming from the heart, and to the heart—our pulpits are full of them: the Caroline divines left them to the Puritans. Confession is not, as it was then, preached up by the clergy, and submitted to, here and there, by the laity; but is absolutely forced by them on us. Care for the poor—what was there in the Caroline movement to match with that which the present age has seen? Had that Penitentiaries? Had that Sisters of Mercy? Had that Houses of Charity? Was it then necessary to find any vent for the abundant zeal which God has been pleased to kindle among our laity, and especially among our women? No such thing. The Church was very much left alone to the clergy, to sink or swim as they succeeded or failed. And even then a certain spirit of dignified formalism, of the genius of the high and dry party in the last century, began to make itself felt. Churchmen were afraid to be natural, to be affectionate, to be persuasive. True it is, and that we must always remember, that the

Church's work was not then, as in great measure it now is, missionary. There were no blotches of heathenism and misery, like the Manchesters, and Ashton-under-Lynes, and the Merthyr Tydvils of the present day :—a stiffness which would now be intolerable was then, perhaps, in some degree pardonable. But still, it gave a very wrong view of the Church ; it turned a pliant, flexible, body, into a stiff unwieldy piece of machinery ; men became in love with coldness, and took dullness for reverence. That chill of feeling began, which culminated in Bishop Lavington's *Enthusiasm of the Methodists and Papists*, a century and a quarter later. I do not deny that this, in a great degree, still exists. But we are beginning to recover from it. We are more than beginning to be ashamed of it. We find that we must become all things to all men, if by any means we may save some. We begin to see that we must avail ourselves of all the machinery that lies in our power ; that the Church, instead of wrapping herself up in a gloomy aloofness from men's interests and proceedings, must throw herself into them—must take them for her starting-points—must transmute and transfigure them to her own purposes. Of all this the Caroline divines had little idea.

IV. Furthermore, the connection of the Church

with the State was, if more specious, also far more dangerous than now. The Church, made, and making herself, a political engine, even for a holy king, was in far more danger than the same Church reviled, insulted, trampled on by a wicked ministry. Persecution, at least such persecution as only can now be ventured on, never did, never can do a Church harm. "The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew." But flattery and state-craft are terrible perils. When Prynne lost his ears in the Star Chamber, and that was considered a victory for the Church, it was indeed a woful triumph. When Laud, having made Juxon Privy Seal, exclaims, "Now, if the Church of England cannot hold herself up, I can do no more ;" it was indeed a woful arm of flesh on which to lean. Better, far better, the infamous appointment of Bishops with which we have now to contend,—better the denial of the barest justice in courts of law,—better an overbearing Privy Council that hates the truth, than this. Better irreligion forced on a reluctant Church to crush her, than religion insinuated as a political instrument to give her influence. We know now what we are about ; if we are in chains,—loathsome and galling enough they are,—we are not lulled by a flattering Government into a reliance on itself, rather than on ourselves, that is,

on our Head. We are not persuaded to hug fetters, none the less fetters, because of gold and silver.

V. Then, again, the unhappy admixture of religion with politics which so deeply coloured the whole Church movement from its rise under Whitgift to its temporary extinction at Naseby, contrasts, happily for us, with the absolute freedom from all party politics which our own movement enjoys. In that former period, a zealous Churchman was also one who possessed the highest ideas of the prerogative, the most exalted notions of divine right in kings, the most perfect abhorrence of every approach to popular principles. Hence, on the one hand, the fearful Erastianism that tainted the greatest divines of the Laudian school, that is to be detected even in Andrewes, that blazes forth in Overall, and Montague, and Cosin; hence, on the other hand, the hatred with which Church principles were received by the democratic party, as inseparably connected with monarchical ideas, in their strictest, and highest, and (to them) most offensive form. Hence, again, in 1688, the disruption of the English Church: those who remained in her, with their divine right principles surrendered also their Church doctrines; those who went out of her were guilty of a schism, because they could not separate the two ideas. Even granting that the nonjuring bishops were right in

refusing the oaths—though such would not have been the conduct of the Primitive or the Mediæval Church—the perpetuation of the succession showed the bitter fruits of the admixture of the politics of this world with the Catholic faith. And the tradition lived even to our own times, nay, and to a certain extent does survive still. Even now we meet with persons who cannot imagine any but one political view to be that of Churchmen. But those who see more deeply have occasion to bless God that the case is far otherwise; that the Church is, even in this sense, made all things to all men; that from the highest pitch of Toryism to the lowest descent of Radicalism, all sentiments find a place among her most devoted sons, and that each and all of these, in their own ways, and among their own partisans, are working for her good. How should we exist if the case were otherwise? What way could the Church make among Chartists, if she came among them, clothed in the aristocratical garb of Caroline times? What chance, humanly speaking, would she have among her aristocratical children, if she appeared to them with the democratic politics of her Belgian sister? How would she be received by Manchester operatives, if she were a Protectionist body? or by Lincolnshire farmers, if she were identified with Free Trade doctrines?

Here, we may depend upon it, is the strength and the wisdom of the Clergy, to keep as much aloof as lies in their power from all politics : or, if they must take them up, to let it be seen that, whatever their views may be, those views have no connection with the Church, and may be opposed by others who are equally her devoted sons. If there is much in which we may take example from Laud, and Ken, and Sancroft, let us in this take warning. To hear some clerical politicians of the present day, one might imagine them desirous of renewing the exhortation of the Venetian General, when about to engage the Papal forces, "Soldiers, remember that you were Venetians before you were Christians !"

VI. Another sign against the final success of the movement of the seventeenth century was this : that the Church party had no adequate sense of the isolation of the Church of England. With the exception of Andrewes and Montague, it may be doubted whether any of the leaders had any deep feeling that a Church, severed from the rest of Christendom, however true a life it may have, however its present situation may have been allotted to it in the course of God's good Providence, can neither speak with the authority, nor hope to produce the fruits, of one more happily

circumstanced. Of the misery of separation, of its necessary mischief, such men as Cosin and Wren seem to have thought little. Let them once make the Church of England at unity with itself, and they were careless about unity with others. It lay with them, to all human appearance, to have been received to formal communion with the Eastern Church. The negotiations which Abbot had commenced with Cyril Lucar, instead of being turned to a higher and holier end by Laud, were suffered to drop. And with respect to Rome, the difficulties of reconciliation were then far less than now. If after the additional bitterness of another century, a moderate man like Wake could, under happy omens of success, commence negotiations with the Gallican Church, what might not Laud have done? Urban VIII. was not indisposed to England, and the schism, then of less than eighty years' standing, might have been healed. On the English side, elderly men must have remembered that their own fathers had lived and died in the communion of Rome; on the Roman side, the secular priests had, shortly before, not been ashamed to have recourse to Bancroft in their great controversy with the Jesuits. The uncharitableness which now prevails between the rival Churches might then have been nipped in the bud. But these things were not to

be; and the want of desire for them was a fatal sign. The Puritan party, so far, had then the best of the argument. "You," said they, "un-church the foreign Churches, and are absolutely isolated—we fraternize with all foreign Protestants, and thus hold communion with hundreds of thousands beyond the pale of our own nation."

I do not, I cannot, deny that this Donatism of our forefathers has, in great measure, descended to us; that we still speak as if we were the model Church; that we still regard ourselves as rich and increased with goods and having need of nothing, not knowing that we are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked; that we still believe ourselves the men with whom wisdom shall die; that we still look down with a happy contempt on venerable liturgies derived from apostolic times—and on rituals full of symbolic gorgeousness, which we call mummery. But still spreading further and further, rooting itself more and more deeply, is the truer appreciation of such things. Men begin to conceive it possible that liturgies, which, if not used by the apostles themselves, were, at all events, known to apostolic men, may be superior to one framed by some few reformers of a national Church. They partly see that we cannot make that Church judge, as well as party, in her

own cause ; that there must be a higher tribunal somewhere ; that unless Canterbury claims to be the mother and mistress of all Churches, she must be content, under pain of schism, whenever that tribunal shall speak, to obey it. Yes ! there is enough of Donatism about us still ; but, God be praised, it has diminished and is daily diminishing. Hand in hand with its diminution must be the increase of that desire for unity, without which all our internal efforts and struggles and sufferings must be in vain.

But, in Caroline times, this Donatism was fearfully rampant. The old leaven that made a then small national Church, quietly and coolly, in eighteen words, condemn, simply by way of illustration, its more venerable sisters of the Eastern Church, affirming that, “as the Churches of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch have erred, so also the Church of Rome hath erred,” this leaven was still strong. Hence, on the one hand, the quiet condemnation of every thing beyond the pale of England—the perpetual vituperation, even by those that should have known better, of Roman idolatry—the almost reception by the Church of the doctrine that the Pope was Anti-Christ—the continual parade of our own communion, both in doctrine and discipline, as the closest approximation to the Primitive Church, and

the very model of apostolic order. Hence, on the other hand, when a growing taste for ritualism, as now, was penetrating England, not, as now, were ancient rituals consulted—not, as now, did ancient service-books increase ten or twenty times in value—but men set to work to invent a ritualism of their own, and, in consequence, succeeded in producing true mummery, if that much misapplied word has any real meaning. Hence such outrageous proceedings as the consecration of an “altar-cloth” lasting three days. Hence such fearful unrealities as Laud’s consecration of S. Catherine Cree, unrealities which involved, if minutely inspected, something nearly approaching heresy.

But, again, the attitude of the English Church, with respect to foreign Protestants, is wonderfully altered for the better. Laud, indeed, had contributed in no small degree to raise her standard; but still, though the proceedings of Queen Elizabeth and King James’s days were no longer thought of—though a Presbyterian would no longer have had licence to administer the sacraments—though a deputation to another Synod of Dort would have been scouted, there was yet a hankering after foreign Protestantism. I know not that any English divine of that period ventured positively and dogmatically to deny its orders. The “fo-

reign Churches," the "less perfectly constituted Churches," the possibility of God's working by other than His ordinary channels—all this we have again and again. It may, indeed, be said that Lutheranism had not then become Rationalism, nor Calvinism manifested itself as Socinianism. But this does not affect the point. Scotch Presbyterianism has as yet become neither one nor the other. But the general feeling of "the moderate party" in the English Church is now higher, as regards that point, than were the sentiments of its greatest divines in that day. How many now, and those not extreme men, would shrink from using the expressions which Laud employed on the scaffold! That this Church of England had been "a shelter to other Churches," *i.e.* Protestant communities, when storms burst upon them—that the king "was as sound a Protestant, *according to the religion by law established*, as any man in the kingdom,"—that he himself died in "the bosom of the Church of England, *established by law*." (And so during his trial he had referred to his zeal for "the true Protestant religion, as by law established.") And these things occur in a speech, the greater part of which, both for spirit and expression, we may safely compare with the dying sayings of any martyr in the history of the Church. As he

spoke in death, so he had acted in life ; hence, his prayers and exertions in favour of the Isle of Rhé expedition, an expedition undertaken to support rebels, and to defend heresy. How has the general average spirit of the Church of England risen since then !

For these things, then, we may well thank God, and take courage. We have enough to dispirit us, enough to make us all but despair ; but a comparison with the Caroline movement is not one of those things. We cannot but rejoice that the present movement is not, as that was, semi-political ; that it aims at a true union with the separated branches of the Catholic Church, not at a false peace with Continental heretics ; that it has, in so tenfold a degree, visible manifestations of life in its new sees, and new churches, and colleges, and schools, and sisterhoods ; falls back in its ritual on earlier times, not on modern inventions ; that it shows so much more of missionary zeal, so much more of reality, so much greater a power of adapting itself to the circumstances in which it is placed. Nor do I know that we stand at a disadvantage in any matters with the Laudian Reformation, except, what is no fault of our own, the opposition we meet, the encouragement it experienced, in high places. And whether that will not be, in the end, an

advantage also, is more than doubtful. Thus, if we have still earnest need to pray, "Turn our captivity, O LORD, as the rivers in the south," we have equal cause again and again to say, "The LORD hath done great things for us already, whereof we rejoice."

XII.

OPEN QUESTIONS.

ONE great difference between the professions of faith which the Church has employed as authorized, in earlier and in later ages, consists in this : that the former are strictly limited to matters of pure dogma, to assertions necessary to salvation, while the latter sometimes embrace statements which, however true, are of subordinate importance, or merely forms of opinion. Take the simple and necessary clauses of the creed of the Apostles, of Nicæa, and of S. Athanasius, and contrast them with the superfluous insertions of later formularies. Thus, the fourth Lateran Council, after laying down the main principles of the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity : *“The Creator of all things, visible and invisible, spiritual and corporeal ; Who created together, and from the beginning, both creations, the spiritual and the material, that is to say, the angelic and the corporeal.”* Here we have two statements, neither of them articles of

faith. The first is, that the Angels were created simultaneously with the world, which S. Thomas characterizes as a mere opinion, and which the Eastern Church absolutely contradicts. The second is, that Angels are by nature pure spirits; which, though next to certain, is nevertheless no article of faith.

Again, in the Second Council of Lyons, in the creed proposed to the Greeks, after the principal dogmas of the faith, follow the five prerogatives of the Roman Church, a belief in which has never, except it be by some furious Ultramontanes, been held essential to salvation.

Nor has the Roman Church alone departed in this matter from primitive model. That of Constantinople, in the office for Orthodoxy Sunday, anathematises many opinions which may fairly be held, many that are at least probable, a few that are something more than probable. The doctrine of Arius, and the belief that the light on Mount Tabor was either created, or of the very essence of the Godhead, are both repudiated with highest vehemence of language.

There cannot be a better rule laid down as to what may, and what may not, be open questions, than that which the celebrated French Doctor, Veron, proposed as the rule of faith. His words

deserve to be written in letters of gold. "That all, and that only, is of the Catholic Faith, which is revealed in the Word of God, and propounded by the Catholic Church to all, as that which must be believed of divine faith." Now let us make some deductions from this canon, and apply them respectively to those symbols of faith with regard to which the English and Roman Churches most bitterly rail at each other:—the Creed of Pope Pius IV., and the Thirty-nine Articles. I will assume, what common candour will allow, that the Church of England, which only professes to be a particular or National Church, cannot claim more weight for her decisions than the Roman Church, which professes to be the Universal Church, does for hers—in other words, she cannot expect a more entire belief in her Articles than the Church Catholic would claim for them if they were adopted by an Œcumenical Council.

The first corollary from Veron's proposition is this: All that the Church propounds, or holds, or teaches, of events posterior to the time of the Apostles—as of the existence of certain revelations, or of certain miracles; of the holiness, virtue, miraculous powers, and final perseverance of those whom the Church has canonized; of the manner in which such and such books are to be understood; of

such and such historical facts ; of such and such philosophical assertions ; none of these things can be propounded to her children as necessary to be believed.

Thus, on the Roman side, it is not an article of faith to hold the sanctity and miracles of any particular saint, when that sanctity and those miracles are known only by canonization, not by revelation. The utmost that can be said is that which S. Thomas does say : *It is piously to be believed, that God does not suffer His Church to err in these matters.* Again, when Pope Zachary anathematized as heretical the assertion that there were antipodes—or when Rome in later days condemned the Newtonian system, these were assertions touching things philosophical, in which the Church itself cannot claim infallibility. Again, when Pope Nicholas III., in one of his decretals, asserted the donation made by Constantine to S. Silvester ; when Alexander VII. declared that the five famous propositions were contained in the *Augustinus* of Jansenius, and were condemned in his sense, they were treating on matters of fact, on which the Church Catholic might have pronounced a mistaken decision.

So, in our Articles, when it is said that S. Jerome expresses a particular opinion respecting

the Apocrypha; that a certain Greek term has been expounded in four different manners: that certain Churches have erred; that the Pelagians hold a particular doctrine; that S. Augustine holds a particular view respecting the participation of the Holy Eucharist by the wicked; that the injunctions of Elizabeth do most plainly testify to a certain fact; that school-authors say, that the works of the unregenerate deserve grace of congruity;—these are all historical assertions, which may or may not be true, but which we cannot be called upon to hold with a divine faith. Thus, when the Book of Homilies ascribes a real existence to Pope Joan, it makes an historical assertion which is now known to be false. So again, when we are told that it is impossible for CHRIST'S natural body to be at the same time in more places than one, this is merely a philosophical opinion, which may or may not be true, and which we are neither concerned to defend or to attack.

The second corollary is: No bulls or decretals of any Pope, no definitions of any council not general, even though presided over by the Pope, can be by themselves alleged as sufficient to form an article of faith. And John Major says: It is no less heresy to affirm a proposition, which is not of the faith, to

be of the faith, than to deny a proposition, which is of the faith. Now, if we are not to apply this same teaching to the English Church, it clearly makes her more rigid, more (as the world speaks) intolerant, than her Roman sister. All boasting, then, about comprehensiveness and freedom, must, in that case, cease. On the other, hand, if we are to apply it to our Church, there are several assertions in the Articles that not only were never sanctioned, but in the nature of things never could have been sanctioned by an Œcumenical Council; and are in no way deducible from any creed received by the Church. Such is that, “the second Book of Homilies contains a godly doctrine and necessary for the times;” such is that, “the Sacrifices of Masses were blasphemous fables, and dangerous deceits;” such is that, “the Book of Consecration of Archbishops and Bishops, set forth in the time of Edward VI., hath nothing that, in itself, is superstitious and ungodly.”

The third corollary is: When the Church condemns any proposition, we are only bound to receive, as *of the faith*, the exact contradictory of that which she expressly and definitively censures—not generally, but—as heretical. So, though the Council of Constance condemned this proposition of Wickliff’s, *The Decretals are false, and the*

clergy that study them are fools, no Roman Catholic would consider himself bound to teach, as of the faith, that the Decretals are true, and the clergy that study them are wise. So in our own Church. The Eighteenth Article anathematizes those who say, that every man shall be saved by the law or sect that he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law, and to the light of nature. The English Church, then, requires us to receive as of faith, the diametrically opposite proposition; and to hold that “no man shall be saved *by* the law or sect that he professeth, so he acts up to the light of nature.” That is, that if he be saved, it will not be on account of his having belonged to it, nor on account of his having acted up to the light of nature. But we are not required to believe in the necessary damnation of heathens and heretics, that not being the proposition rigorously opposite to that condemned.

The fourth corollary is this: This is only to be held rigorously and strictly as the teaching of the Church which, in any definition, is its intention and design; not that which is said by way of illustration or argument: to use the common term, *per transennam*. Nor is it of faith to receive a particular explanation of any text of Scripture. For one of the most famous of Latin Canonists observes:

“ Sometimes the Church confirms a definition with proofs some of which are inconclusive.”*

Now, in the Articles there are many examples of the statements made *per transennam*. In the Eighth, the Three Creeds ought thoroughly to be received and believed—that is the aim and scope of the Article. The reason assigned, “ for they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture,” is an argument, the reception of which is not of faith. In the Twenty-fifth :—“ They that receive them”—the Sacraments—“ unworthily, purchase to themselves damnation, as S. Paul saith.” We are not therefore bound to hold that S. Paul was referring to Baptism also, in the passage to which the Article here alludes. So, in the Fourteenth, the aim and scope of the Article is to maintain that “ Works of supererogation cannot be taught without vanity or impiety.” The text alleged, “ Whereas CHRIST saith plainly, When ye have done all that are commanded to you, say, we are unprofitable servants,” may, or may not be, and we may, or may not, hold it as, conclusive.

Now, however, I will turn from our Articles to those of Rome : and, bringing forward solely the testimony of Roman Catholic Divines, will examine

* Vasquez, in iii. Sent. Q. 181, cap. 9.

what are open questions in her communion, on one or two of those subjects on which she is popularly held to be most opposed to ourselves, and afterwards I will make some deductions with regard to our own Church. Let us take those of purgatory, and of indulgences.

The general teaching of the Church of Rome, on the subject of purgatory, forms the Eighth Article of the Creed of Pope Pius IV., "I constantly hold that there is a purgatory, and that the souls there detained are assisted by the prayers of the faithful."

Now, when we compare what is by Anglo-Romanists of the present day brought forward as the accredited teaching of the Church on this point, and especially by the sect of the Oratorians—how their own explanations and additions and hypotheses are set forth as part and parcel of the Catholic Faith—we may well wonder into what developments Ultramontanism will be permitted to run: we may well be grieved at the wickedness of putting these unnecessary hindrances in the way of unity. For example, an Oratorian thus writes of the souls in purgatory:—

"In pains beyond all earthly pains,
Favourites of JESUS, there they lie,
Letting the fire wash out their stains,
And worshipping God's purity."

The writer here, in a book intended for what he considers a missionary country, and where therefore the truth should be stated with all the caution possible, and that which is matter of opinion carefully distinguished from that which is matter of faith—intrudes two uncertain points, uncertain, I mean, according to the teaching of his own Church. The first is, that the pains of purgatory are necessarily and certainly great, beyond all earthly pains. This is an open question among Roman Theologians. S. Bonaventura, for instance, teaches, that though there are pains in that place greater than any earthly agonies, yet there also are pains less than any earthly affliction. Again, the Oratorian assumes, that there is real and true fire in purgatory. Yet this was strictly denied by the Greeks at Florence, and, in consequence of their sentiments, left an open question there, and also at Trent. Again, the duration of purgatory is a perfectly open question in the Roman Church. Some have believed it, in many instances, to extend to the end of the world. Others, as Dominic Soto, have held that, in general, it did not last more than ten or twenty years. Yet a precise, dogmatic, matter-of-faith belief is now thrust by Rome on her converts in almost all these particulars.*

* See Appendix A.

The subject of indulgences is a still more striking instance. Probably very few persons are aware how very little the formal declarations of Pope Pius IV., and of the Council of Trent, contain on this matter. The Creed simply says, "I affirm that the power of indulgences has been left by CHRIST in his Church, and that their use is salutary to Christian people." The definition of the Council affirms, "Since the power of indulgences hath been left by CHRIST to His Church, and this power, divinely granted to her, hath been used by her from the most ancient times, the Holy Synod teaches and commands that the use of indulgences, as most salutary to Christian people, and approved by the authority of Holy Councils, be retained in the Church—and condemns, with an anathema, them that either assert such indulgences to be useless, or deny that the power of granting them exists in the Church. In their concession, however, it desires that prudence and moderation be employed, according to the ancient and approved order in the Church, lest, by too great facility, ecclesiastical discipline should be impaired."

Now, if we compare this canon with the infamous mission of Tetzels, it is very remarkable that we should find the use of indulgences based on the fact that the Church employed them from the

beginning. But the indulgences of the ancient Church consisted, as every scholar knows, merely in the remission of canonical penances. It is the power, then, of granting such a remission, and no other power, which the Council of Trent declares an article of faith. The heap of additional matter with which modern Rome invests her teaching on the subject, belongs to modern Rome only; and it is grossly unfair to allege the Tridentine Canons in its favour. Indeed, there have not been wanting, in all ages, Roman Doctors, who have taught with Durandus de Sancto Porciano, "It is but little which can be said with certainty on the subject of indulgences." This, clearly, was the opinion of the Council; there were not wanting many who wished for a stricter and ampler definition; but the moderation of Egidio Foscarari, Bishop of Modena, prevailed.

It is no article of faith, then, according to Trent, whatever it may be according to modern Rome, that indulgences are granted from the Treasury of the merits of CHRIST. The Council makes no mention of any such treasury, and its existence has been denied by more than one Roman Divine of eminence. Thus a famous Scotist of the 14th century, Francis Mayron, known as the "*acute Doctor*," taught that such a treasury was a fable.

Van Espen, (though of course his authority would be nothing among Ultramontanes) proves that it was an invention of the twelfth century.

Much less is it an article of faith that this treasury consists of the merits of the Saints, as well as those of CHRIST. And yet how confidently this is now taught by the Oratorians, as if it were as certain as the doctrine of the Incarnation or the TRINITY! It has been over and over again denied by Roman doctors, by none more strongly than by Maldonatus; and this, notwithstanding the Extravagant of Clement VI., which asserts it; and the condemnation by Leo X. of the fourteenth proposition of Luther, which denies it. Veron argues against these papal declarations, with what success, on his own principles, I am not bound to say, but, at all events, he denies the doctrine they contain.

We know perfectly well that modern Rome uses her indulgences of a thousand years as the principal means of exciting devotion. She makes them almost incredibly easy of acquirement; she authorises them to be applied to the dead as well as the living; the keystone of her present system was one unknown to Trent, and absolutely denied by its theologians. "As for indulgences," says Peter Soto, who was papal theologian in that Council, "it is sufficient to believe that they may

be granted. But that this or that indulgence is valid, is not of faith, for it is not necessary to believe the assistance of the HOLY GHOST in things which are dependent on faith, but the mere arbitrary motions of the Pope."

And far stronger language is used by Roman theologians on indulgences of a hundred or a thousand years. Dominic Soto, one of the greatest Tridentine divines, writing on the Sentences, replies to the question, What are we to say of such? in these words: "We are to say, that PORTENTS of this kind the Pope never intended to grant." Estius, one of the greatest theologians of his age, says: "Hence it appears how absurd, how little to be ascribed to the Apostolic See, but merely apocryphal, or extorted at unawares, are indulgences of thousands of years."

Now to me this is really startling. Modern Rome feeds the devotion of her people with indulgences of ten, twenty, thirty thousand years. It is needless to give examples. Take an instance now existing in Ferrara. "The just measure of the foot of the Blessed Mother of God, copied from her shoe, which is preserved with great devotion in a Spanish monastery; John XXII. granted three hundred years of indulgence to whoever will kiss this measure three times, and recite three *Ave*

Marias, which was confirmed by Clement VIII. in 1603. These indulgences are not prescribed as to number, and are applicable to the souls in purgatory. And for the greater glory of the Queen of heaven, it is allowed to take copies of this measure, all of which shall have the same indulgence."

In this case, then, a couple of hours' devotion might procure thirty thousand years of indulgence. So at S. Pudenziana at Rome; by visiting that church on certain days, one may obtain an indulgence of 3000 years, and the remission of the third part of one's sins. But it is needless to prove what none can well deny. "Indulgences"* says a writer, from whose pages more, perhaps, may be learned of the modern working of the Roman Church than from any other, "form the mainspring of the modern devotion. Obtain an indulgence for this church, or this altar, or this relic, or this prayer, or this action, and popularity will follow. Neglect to obtain an indulgence, through poverty or want of zeal, and the intrinsic authenticity of a relic, or undoubted sanctity of a spot, will not suffice to gain a reasonable veneration."

Keeping all this in mind, what are we to say, when we find two of the leading Theologians at

* Webb's Continental Ecclesiology, p. 558.

Trent declaring, the one that such indulgences are portents, the other that they are merely apocryphal? Verily, it seems hard to refrain from thinking that there is heresy on the one side or on the other.

These, then, are all examples how questions open at the Council of Trent have been, partly by papal authority, partly by a kind of general consent, closed. And the thing is precisely the same among ourselves.

Let us take, for example, the question of Prayers for the Dead. If, thirty years ago, a man of average theological information had been asked, Does the Church of England allow them? he would undoubtedly have replied, Certainly not. With no one fact, or statement, or clause, to fortify his assertion, he would have felt safe in making it. Why? Because the general sense of popular tradition and belief would have so strongly borne him out. He would probably have been as surprised to find that the Church never, implicitly or explicitly, censured them, while many of her greatest divines have preached them and taught them, as the common kind of Roman Catholics, to learn that their Church has never authorised the present system of indulgences, while some of her best theologians have, since Trent, called them *portents*.

Once more, do we not again and again hear

statements that the Church of England condemns the *idolatry* of Rome? Yet is there a single syllable concerning the idolatry of Roman practices in the Articles? Is it not said, with remarkable moderation, considering the characters of the men, that the worshipping of images is (not idolatry, but) merely “a fond theory, vainly invented, founded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God?” True; the Homilies indulge in far harsher language. But if we are to be tied to them as to a Confession of Faith, we must believe in the divine right of kings, in the inspiration of the Apocrypha, in the benefit of a fish diet, in the anti-Christianity of the Pope, in the binding authority of the example of the early Church. Does any one man believe in all these things together? A plain proof that we are not tied to hold detached sentences and assertions, even though we may be willing to aver that, as a whole, the Book of Homilies contains a godly doctrine, and necessary for the times.

These considerations are not at all immaterial to those who believe that the day will come when the three great branches of the Catholic Church, as they are now invisibly one, so they will be then visibly and formally united. To us, indeed, calling up the arguments, the concessions, the debates,

the bitterness, which must be gone through before that blessed time can arrive, it may well seem a hopeless vista of difficulties through which we are looking to it. But of the cheering considerations which meet us, undoubtedly this is the first : How very little of formal decision either Rome or Canterbury have made against each other. The tendency, the popular feeling, the apparent aim of the two bodies, is confessedly, in bitter opposition. But put down Liguorism in Rome, and so-called Evangelicalism among ourselves, and what a gulf we have at once bridged over ! True, peace-makers between these two great communions never have been, and probably never will be, popular characters. Wake and Dupin may look in vain for earthly praise. In their effort for union they no doubt merited the blessing of being "the children of God." But in Ultramontane histories it is the infamous Dubois who is the hero, because he put a stop to the negotiation. So others, like De Dominis, like Sancta Clara, like Bishop Forbes, are stigmatised by both sides as faithless, as deserters, as apostates. Their reward is not here.

The time will come when the party barriers which the sixteenth century erected on both sides shall be swept away in the full gush of love which shall unite the reconciled churches. In the mean-

while, would that we could more and more see the sin of adding new difficulties on either side ! And here, at least, we are clear. We do not add new articles of faith to our terms of communion, as Liguorism is doing for Rome. We have nothing which can be brought forward against us, as the establishment of the Immaculate Conception for an article of faith, if, unhappily, it should ever take place, may be alleged against Rome. Whatever may now be thought by the defenders of the two churches, the day will assuredly come, when both one and the other shall have cause to thank God that, of the points in debate betwixt them, so many were, by the overruling guidance of Providence, in so large a degree, open questions.

XIII.

SERMONS.

IT is the boast of English Churchmen, and not altogether without reason, that the various services of their Prayer Book, the various arrangements of their Church, are distinguished by their plain, practical, sound, common sense. If they have, comparatively speaking, little æsthetical beauty, if they are deprived of the mystery and unearthliness of earlier offices, they are reasonable, they are sober, they have nothing that can offend the most fastidious taste. They may want warmth, they may want rapture, they may want life, but they will bear, to the utmost, critical inspection. And this, in an unimpressible and prosaic nation, is undeniably, a great blessing. If the Prayer Book neither soars, nor pretends to soar, to the ecstatic devotion of the Missal or Breviary, at all events we are free from the doll-dressing, the vulgar tawdriness, the unmanly silliness, with which

much of the Missal and Breviary are now practically overrun. The proper epithet of our services is *sensible*.

But in one most important particular this common sense is thrown to the winds. The Sunday practice of the English Churchman is so utterly opposed to the sober rational devotion in which he prides himself, that, if we were to read of it, instead of witnessing it, we should be tempted to pronounce it incredible. I allude, of course, to the delivery, such as it is, in general cases, of sermons.

There seems to exist an universal belief that the mere fact of having taken orders will enable a man, twice every Sunday, the whole year round, to address a congregation on religious subjects, for three quarters of an hour at a time, to the benefit of his hearers. These addresses are to be cool, rational compositions, seldom appealing to the feelings, but supposed to inform, to instruct, to convince the reason, to approve themselves to the judgment. They are made, and are known to be made, with little elaboration. The composers have necessarily little leisure. The author, unskilled in composition, unversed in theology, with less power, with less knowledge, with less time, than probably many of his hearers, opens a Bible, finds a text, probably looks what this or that divine has said upon it,

strings together all the thoughts that come into his mind as in any way bearing upon the subject ; and what with common-places and quotations, and the circumstances under which the text was spoken, and the never-failing *resumés*, the requisite sheets are filled, the requisite time is supplied, and the preacher mounts the pulpit on the following morning with the happy consciousness that he will not break down in his task. That he should have some pleasure in delivering what has cost him so much labour to prepare, is natural. That he should like to fix the attention of his people on himself for three-quarters of an hour is natural too. But the wonder is that English congregations have not, long ago, as one man, risen against the system. The wonder is that intellectual men can, uncomplainingly, sit to hear the miserable attempts at logic and ratiocination which too often disgrace our pulpits, can do it as a duty, and can think it profitable. For it is not as if these discourses were addressed to the poor and illiterate. Then, of course, common charity would oblige the more intellectual part of the congregation to be willing to give up their own profit for that of those who have fewer means of grace. But is it possible that, as sermons are now, the really ignorant can understand one sentence out of ten ? Is it not

certain that, among those who have been regular church-goers for fifty or sixty years, that is, who have heard some five or six thousand sermons, we every now and then find instances where the most elementary doctrines of the Church have never been understood ; such doctrines, I mean, as the Fall of Man, the Incarnation, the Atonement, the Blessed TRINITY, nay even the intention, nay even the very name, of the Ten Commandments ? It is too true that, take an average sermon and an average congregation, and its cultivated portion hears nothing which they have not heard twenty times before ; its more ignorant members hear nothing which they could either understand before, or can comprehend now.

There are not wanting those who will defend the present system of things, by investing the clergy when they preach with the authority of their Master, and imagining that He speaks in and by them. If it is meant that, as soon as a priest enters the pulpit, he is inspired, we could apprehend the earnestness, if we condemned the superstition of the belief. But loose theology, unnecessary arguments, endless repetitions, wearisome commonplace, are not the results to which such a theory would lead. Texts are quoted, indeed, in defence of the authority of sermons, with as great laxity as

the quoters of isolated texts are in the habit of evincing. "Now, then, we are ambassadors for CHRIST, as though GOD did beseech you by us." True, we are CHRIST's ambassadors. But it is the whole of our office—the sum and substance of our priestly life—the administration of His sacraments—it is the visiting of His poor, the comforting of His sick, the strengthening of His tempted ones, not the mounting the pulpit, and taking a text, that constitutes us so. The priesthood will not enable a man of average attainments, with little study, with little research, without time for thought, to read a dissertation that, to men of average intellect, can be worth hearing.

Are there to be no sermons, then? Yes, indeed, we have in them a most mighty engine, if we only would use it the right way. Let us see where it is, and how we fail in this matter.

Often and often has the Church of England suffered from her friends. Never, perhaps, more so, than from one short clause of the Act of Uniformity. Thus it runs:—"Provided always, and be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that at all and every time, or times, when any Sermon or Lecture is preached, the common Prayer and Service, in and by the said book appointed to be read for that time of the day, shall be publicly, openly, and

solemnly read, by some priest or deacon, in the church, chapel, or place of worship where the said Sermon or Lecture is to be preached, before such Sermon or Lecture be preached.”

Now, notice how in every conceivable way this clause, no doubt inserted with the best intent, cripples the working powers of the Church.

A man desires to hear a sermon. He is ignorant, and he wishes to be instructed. It is one of the Church's holy seasons, and he wishes to have his feelings aroused. Why should he not have it simply, rationally, as common sense would dictate, by itself? He may not have time—few working men can have—to give an hour both to the prayers and to that. It may be no undervaluing the prayers; simply at that time he may not want them. And, if it *be* an undervaluing the prayers, no man will be dragooned into liking them. It is behaving as to a child to say, If you will not have the prayers, you shall not have the sermon. It is the sure way to disgust a man with the former, by making them the stepping-stone to the latter. It is, in point of fact, turning them into the bitter by which the sweet is to be purchased.

See the immediate consequence. Hence the system of cottage lectures. If the sermon were in the church, it must be preceded by the prayers; if it

were preceded by prayers, it must be an hour long ; if it were an hour long, nobody would go. But if the sermon is preached in a cottage, and called a lecture, it need not take more than half-an-hour, and people will throng to it. I am not now speaking of those cottage lectures which are held three or four miles from the Church, in outlying districts, and wild moors—these are a kind of missionary stations. But I mean where the lecture is held in the village, in the school-room, nay (as I have known it) in the very vestry itself. Thus the minds of the poor are drawn away from the fabric of the church ; thus the service most interesting to them is detached from it ; thus their minds are gradually prepared for, and ready to fall into, dissent. And so dissent is the probable result of a high, stiff, Church and State act, that was meant to cut up the Puritans, root and branch.

Look at another result : as the poorer classes would go to sermon, if there were no prayers that came first, so the upper classes might be ready enough to go to prayers, if there were no sermon that came after. The prayers they want, the sermon they do not want. So it comes to pass that some who, had the two been detached, would have gone to one, stay away from both ; for with our stiff, unreal, stereotyped notions, to come out at the end

of the prayers would be thought an insult to the clergyman, if not to the Church; it would make a disturbance, it would look irreverent, and a whole string more of those wretched Anglicanisms which set a piece of etiquette above the profit of a soul. But some of the upper classes, it may be said, go still. They do, and thus the case is made worse. If there had been only a sermon, the poor only would have gone, and the priest in that case would have addressed himself to the poor only. Then they would have had a chance of understanding what was said; but now the case is very different. As the upper classes are so polite to the clergyman as to stay to his sermon, the clergyman, with responsive politeness, addresses himself principally to them, and "my poorer brethren" come in for a very small share of what, but for the provisions of the Act of Uniformity, would have been theirs altogether. Here is another reason why the poor would not so readily attend sermons in Church. There they feel that they are not the preacher's objects—in the cottage they are. How often we hear the parish priest deprecating the attendance of a better informed parishioner: "Oh! it is only a cottage lecture!" Whereas if it were known that the sermon preached in the evening twice or thrice a-week (every day of his life, so the

labourer have strength for it), if it were known that this was intended for the poor as much as catechising is intended for children, the poor would flock to it.

For, of course, if strength allowed, any man of ordinary attainments might preach daily to the poor, without wearying them, and no doubt to their much advantage. If we could only realize to ourselves how little they know, we should oftener avoid that fatal mistake of taking for granted that they are acquainted with things of which they have not the remotest idea. Even one word not understood, or misunderstood, may ruin a whole sermon. For example, one may preach of the Crucifixion, of the love which endured it, of the benefits which it wrought, of the return that we should make for these benefits, so clearly and simply, that the poorest and most ignorant might understand, *if* they knew what *Crucifixion* meant. But for want of that knowledge, the whole discourse might almost as well be preached in an unknown tongue. And this is no exaggerated case. We who, in our great wisdom, have scouted pictorial symbols, find it difficult to realize the depth of ignorance in which the poor, who are taught much more by the eye than by the ear, are involved. It is useful to take a somewhat similar case. Try to make a child,

brought up in one of the city lanes, understand what you mean by a *tree* ; notwithstanding the real trees he may have seen in the dusky little courts or churchyards ; notwithstanding the pictures of the country which he can scarcely fail here and there to have noticed, you will hardly give him the least idea of the fresh green beauty, and life, and motion of the waving boughs. Take a child from the fen districts, and speak to him of mountains, or take a child from the midland counties, and speak to him of the sea, and what idea do you give him ? In like manner, when you speak of the Cross and Crucifixion, what ideas do those words convey ? I believe, from my heart, that, among the grown-up labouring poor, in whose education pictures were far less used than is now the case, fully one-half have no idea at all of the manner in which our LORD suffered. They know that He endured something dreadful for our sakes ; but what, and of what kind, there they are completely in the dark. I allude to this, to prove how great ought to be our care that we explain all that needs explanation. If you examine the sermons of those who have been the effective preachers of the Church, in countries where pictures and other the like representations were continually before the eyes of the poor, and where, therefore, such exactness of description was

far less necessary than it is among ourselves : how fully, how vividly do they describe every thing ! Read S. Bernard, in those sermons which were clearly addressed to a country congregation ; read S. Bonaventura ; read one who, by contemporary accounts, (though we should not judge so from the sermons of his that we possess,) was, as a popular preacher, superior to both—I mean S. Antony of Padua ; and you will see how needlessly particular, to modern notions, they all are in their descriptions. They knew, what we do not know, the ignorance of the poor. And it is remarkable that the most learned men have often had the deepest insight into this, and, by consequence, have preached most popularly. It is recorded of S. Thomas Aquinas that such was his plainness and intelligibility, as to cause the poor to flock in from miles round whenever it was known that he was to preach.

This fact is also worth consideration. It was the calculation of one intimately acquainted with the manufacturing districts, (where, whatever may be the spiritual need, intellectual ignorance cannot be compared with that of rural population,) that the number of words in use between the members of an ordinary manufacturer's family, was considerably under a hundred. Now, reckoning the different words employed in a common sermon as not

less than five hundred, (and I believe that is under the mark,) here are four different words out of five to which the every-day run of labourers are not accustomed. I do not mean to say that they do not understand many of them, if they give themselves leisure to think ; but that they are not the usual ordinary terms which they employ, and that they want a little time to think them over. Take a somewhat similar case. Read a page of some ordinary Greek work, for the first time, even to a scholar ; there will very probably be not a word which, if he had the book before him, he could not most easily explain ; there will very probably be not a single phrase or turn of expression with which he has not often met. But, notwithstanding, he will most likely carry away nothing but the vaguest general impression of what was the subject of the whole, and may not have caught the precise and definite meaning of any one sentence.

And yet in how reckless a way will men use words, which, if they took the trouble of giving a moment's thought to the subject, they must be quite certain that their poor hearers have not a chance of understanding ! and this without the least necessity, from the depth of their meaning or the technicality of their doctrine, but simply because the word that comes first is first taken. The

simpler phrase would not debase the sense, would not be distasteful to the better educated portion of the congregation, but it might take them a few more seconds to hit upon. And so, because the clock is striking ten or eleven on the Saturday night, and six or eight pages more of the sermon have to be written, the first term that comes is dashed down, and the unfortunate labourers and their children must misunderstand it as they may.

But now, let us come to another reason why our sermons tell so little among the poor. It is because they are so perpetually and so constantly read. I do not mean that they should never, that they should not often, be written. That is necessary, at least for the preacher, if not for the auditors. But what must poor men think when they see their parish priest unable to speak to them of the plainest truths of the faith without writing down what he has to say? Are we so little in the habit of thinking and speaking of these things, that we cannot lead our poor people to look to that LAMB of God, Which taketh away the sins of the world—that we cannot tell them of those glad tidings of great joy, that unto them was born in the city of David a SAVIOUR, CHRIST the LORD—that we cannot warn them from any remarkable visitation, from any sudden death in the parish, to prepare to meet

their God, without going into our studies, and arranging our paper, and sitting down to a three or four hours' task, spinning sentence after sentence, dovetailing idea into idea, and trying to keep in mind rules and art, beginning, middle, and end? Why, while we are setting ourselves to think what we are to say, and how we are to say it, the Dissenting preacher will have delivered his sermon and produced his impression. Why is all this? Is it that we really do not much believe what we say? Is it that we do not really feel our message? Is it that we are shy, and are afraid of breaking down, or that we are gentlemanly, and afraid of not rounding off our sentences, or proud, and afraid of criticism? For God's sake do let us show that we do believe, and do feel—that we can speak of religion as easily as we could speak of any important subject—that what we say in the pulpit is not got up for the occasion—that we do not preach because we are paid for it—that we believe in our LORD's words, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." If it were only this, it were reason enough for sometimes preaching extempore.

Of course, extempore preaching need not, and should not be, extempore thinking. No doubt, a parish priest ought to be able, when occasions really demand it, to address a congregation without

preparation. If the want of previous thought is not his fault, but is merely the result of circumstances, he ought to trust in that Master, Whose message he is about to deliver, and believe that it shall be given him in that same hour what he shall speak. And if he has not nerve or self-confidence for the task, he should pray for it as he would for any other gift. But, in ordinary cases, extempore preaching, so far from supposing less time, gives more time for preparation. And that for two reasons. Of the six or seven hours which an ordinary priest will give to a common sermon, how much is taken up in the mere mechanism of writing, how much in the word-finding and sentence-polishing formalities of written composition, with which Lindley Murray has as much, at least, to do, as the Gospel! Now, an extempore sermon avoids the labour of writing entirely, and transfers, and that much more satisfactorily, the sentence-making to the pulpit. All the time thus gained may be given to more reading, or deeper thinking on the subject; and the sermon, therefore if (which is doubtful) a little poorer in manner, will be all the richer in matter. Again, how many odds and ends of time are there which to the pen-and-ink man, to whom a study, and leisure, and all the paraphernalia of writing are necessary for the

composition of a discourse, are, so far as a sermon is concerned, thrown away, but which, to him who trusts entirely to the mind, can be as profitably employed, as if he were surrounded by all facilities for elaborate composition ?

But there is yet another reason why the habit of extempore preaching is so important for effectiveness. What is written is written. You may see that it does not tell—you may feel that you are throwing away words—you may catch the vacant eye, the suppressed yawn—the consulted watch ; but it matters not, on you must go. The appointed number of pages lies before you, and you must get through it. The listlessness of your congregation re-acting upon you, your manner becomes heavier, your matter, in consequence, duller, and you come down from the pulpit feeling that you have changed a means of grace into a temptation to sin. But now, if you ascend the pulpit well stored with matter, and about to speak extempore : in the first place, the freedom of your glance is a great thing. Your squire's family is inattentive ; your voice and eye is upon that. The old women from the almshouse are fidgetty ; you turn to them. Your principal farmer is composing himself to a nap ; it is very hard to go to sleep if you speak to the somnolent person. And

another advantage is this—and a very great advantage it is—that, retaining the matter, the manner is instinctively and almost unconsciously altered as you turn to different parts of the audience. And where the attention of the congregation plainly flags, a thing which is much sooner observed when the preacher is not taken off by his book, then it is perfectly easy to adduce some pat illustration, some well-timed story, which shall rekindle interest. And then, too, all the stiffness and stiltedness of a book discourse is avoided. I think it may be laid down as a general rule, that a sermon which reads well when printed, will never produce a popular effect; and that the words which excited and interested an ordinary congregation, will seem to have “nothing in them” when printed in a book. Turn to the great masters of effective preaching. The two most striking examples of what it can produce, are, I suppose, the missions of the early Jesuits in Portugal, and those of Whitefield and Wesley. There are many points of resemblance. A luxurious age—an intensely ignorant peasantry—a high and dry clergy—extravagance and bad taste among the missionaries—then numbers turned from open wickedness to, as it may justly be believed, true repentance. Of the ignorance of the English

miners, I need give no example ; one may suffice to prove that of the Portuguese peasantry. The Archbishop of Braga, Bartholomeo dos Martyres, one of the holiest men of his day, visiting a distant and scarcely accessible portion of his diocese, was met processionally by its rustic population, with this anthem : “ Blessed be the adorable TRINITY, and her sister, the most pure Virgin.” Those discourses which, in the wild glens of Nossa Senhora d’Estrella, brought hardened sinners to confession after fifty years of iniquity ; and, in the Bristol coal-fields, furrowed (according to the description of an eye-witness) the black faces of the colliers with white channels, those discourses, when written down, seem poor, lifeless, insipid. And the Portuguese reformers met with the bitterest scorn and hatred from the Lavingtons, and Cornwallises, and Potters, of that day. It was all enthusiasm, folly, ignorance ; it must be put down with a high hand. “ Have you ever had any visions or supernatural revelations since you entered the college ?” was the question put by an ecclesiastical commission to one of the Jesuit students. “ I have indeed had a vision,” he answered. Abbat looked at Commendatory, the non-resident Dean of this place at the titular Prior of that. “ And what was the nature of the

vision?" "It was a vision of my sins," was the reply, "of which I previously never understood either the number or the magnitude." The reverend interrogators were silent. Yet the sermons which wrought this and the like changes, when printed, seem, as I said, very poor. In like manner, S. Antony of Padua's sermons will, I think, disappoint any reader. We have good evidence for the wonderful effect they wrought; but they are most tedious to the modern scholar. So, to take an exactly reverse view, we know that Burke's speeches, with all their wonderful eloquence, cleared the House of Commons.

How far the unimpressible character of the English will suffice to account for the difference between the passionate pathos of the best foreign sermons, compared with the logical and instructive character of our own, may be a doubtful question. No doubt, discourses suited to the impulsive feelings of the French or Italians would not do here. But whether this may not arise from the refrigeration of the last century, is another matter. The Dutch are at least as unimpressible as the English; and yet it is remarkable that the most passionate book of devotion perhaps ever writtten, was the production of Catholic Holland—I mean the *Inflamed Soliloquies* of Gerlach Petersen.

It is difficult for one who has not actually been present at such a scene, with all its good and with all its harm, (for it has both), to realize the effect of a fervid sermon on an excitable people. I remember hearing a Passion sermon, in a Portuguese church, which gave me some little insight into the effects of such a discourse. The preacher, a very eloquent man, descanted—it was Good Friday—on the details of our Blessed LORD's Passion; at first, as I thought, without producing any great effect. He seemed to me to be conscious that he was not successful; he made his descriptions more harrowing—his appeals more personal. The attention of the congregation gradually became attracted, fixed, rivetted. Here and there the big tears were rolling down. At length, after dwelling on the remorse of S. Peter, he paused, and burst out with, “*E não quereis chorar com Pedro? Se alguém ha que o não quer, saia, saia para fora!*” (And will ye not weep with Peter! If any one there be who will not, out with him, out with him from the church!)—at the same time waving his hand to the door, through which a streaming ray of sunshine was at that moment pouring into the hot, black, mourning, building. The effect was almost electric. At that moment I thought that a violent shower was passing over the roof, and

rattling and dashing on the tiles. But it was the hysterical burst of grief from the congregation, seizing and working up the whole in an instant—as the hygre does the Severn—till the sobs and agitation were the only sounds to be heard. Now in England, we have not seen, we probably never had, anything resembling this. The same effect, the same outward show, would not be produced by the same cause. But I yet must think, that if we knew how to touch our people's feelings, though we should not, and should not wish to, produce what in a southern people would be perfectly natural, still the effect we should see would be beyond anything that we usually witness.

But there is one ingredient in the great sermons of foreign churches, which, as it becomes incorporated in our own, will add incalculably to their value, their truthfulness, and their interest—I mean the knowledge of the human heart acquired by Confession. “He knew what was in man,” is said of our Blessed LORD; and, to a certain extent, it must be true of His priests, if they will exert the powers with which He has entrusted them. How can these things be learned from books? To say that the Confessional gives a clearer insight into the heart, is to say that a blind man, gaining sight, has a more accurate vision than before. It

is not to be described by more or less—it is a new sense. Hearers wonder that the preacher knows, as by instinct, what is within them. They find him entering into their temptations, their sorrows, their struggles, as if he had shared them, and they marvel whence he has his knowledge. They refer it to natural power, perhaps; perhaps to much study of books; and forget the key that unlocks all hearts. Much more might be said on this point, but I reserve it for another opportunity.

Hitherto I have principally been speaking of average sermons and average congregations. Now let us turn our attention to greater efforts,—such efforts as might be made in those annual crusades into the kingdom of Satan that Advent and Lent ought to be. Imagine a bishop, instead of giving and attending parties in London, during Lent, betaking himself to his cathedral, and organising a scheme of Lent sermons. He selects some twenty picked men of his diocese,—picked, not only for moral, but for physical, qualifications,—the best voices, the best theologians, the most eloquent, the most learned, the best logicians, the best describers,—all, in their turn, and each in his different way, labouring to the conversion of souls. Imagine the nave of the cathedral opened, when the business of the day was over,—imagine it a blaze

of light—imagine nothing spared that could attract the tradesman, the shopkeeper, the lodger in the miserable alley, the hard-working mechanic,—what a harvest of souls might be reaped!—how many spiritual stones might be built up into God's living temple! Why should we not see in England what, over and over again, we see abroad? I remember, at Mechlin, on a lovely evening in spring, which might have tempted any one—how much more a Belgian!—to the *Place* or the *Boulevard*, finding one of the largest churches crammed literally to suffocation, and that merely on a common work day, to hear an eloquent Flemish preacher, delivering, at the archbishop's desire, a course, I believe, of lectures. We see such things in England, in their way; but then it is not the young artisan, the horny-handed labourer, the railway navigator, rank with that day's sweat, the stall woman, the fish seller, that crowd the open nave,—it is the elegantly dressed lady, the retired man of business, the preacher's personal admirers, who hang upon his words, as much as the “distressing” heat, and the fan, and the eau-de-cologne bottle, will allow them. The ninety and nine just persons that need, or think they need, no repentance, we catch,—the thousands of straying sheep may stray still, so far as our sermons are concerned.

But now let us carry the same idea to London, and imagine the effect which the Lent preachers (of which a shadow and a sham still exists) might exercise, if restored to the design of the original institution. Men chosen for moderation,—and we all know what moderation now-a-days means,—are set to preach in churches inaccessible, and at hours impossible, to the poor, and succeed in reading a formal discourse to a formal congregation, that can be reckoned by tens ! And this, so far as the regular organization of this warfare with Satan is concerned, is all that is done in a huge, luxurious, overgrown, wicked city. Faithful priests, here and there, set an example which bishops ought to give, but will not even follow ; and, according to their several means, they do their duty. But what if their efforts were systematised, and combined into one ? What if, instead of half-a-dozen Lent churches, and as many sleepy Lent lectures, every evening throughout Lent, each principal division of London had its popular preacher, picked for the occasion, formed for the locality, speaking of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, not of the existence of a God, and of the corruptions of Rome ! —what if, whether men would hear or forbear, they were at that season reminded, in ways which they could not fail to notice, that they have souls to be

saved, that it is appointed unto all men once to die, but after that the judgment? Then, indeed, when the thing was felt to be in earnest, the churches would be crowded,—then we should learn something of that of which we talk so much—the value of preaching. It is a curious thing that the last attempt made by a bishop of London himself to head the holy crusade of Lent was made by Porteus at the beginning of the present century. The character of that prelate is well known. A diletante scholar, the correspondent of the literary ladies of those times, he preached the weak, marrowless, *prettyish* discourses that might have been expected; but the effect was prodigious. His three successors have allowed forty-three Lents to pass since his decease; but the example has not been followed.

With respect to market-towns, the Puritan plan of *combined lectures* is very well worth notice. Bishop Montague describes it to be, “when many neighbouring ministers do voluntarily agree and consent, with the Ordinary’s approbation, not otherwise, to preach a sermon, every man in his course at some adjoining market-town, upon the market day, for instructing such as repair together to sell and to buy, in his duty to God, and conscience with man.” The Caroline divines, acting

with that unhappy stiffness which so often distinguished them, instead of turning these lectures to their own purpose, were rather for discouraging them altogether. But surely the practice itself is capable of producing no small fruit for the Church.

But the great want,—the only means which, humanly speaking, could reach such masses of spiritual misery as Merthyr Tydvil, or Ashton-under-Lyne,—is the revival, under strict regulations, and with picked men, of *field preaching*. All earnest men, of whatever views, feel the necessity of this. That which saved the Church in the thirteenth century would add incalculable strength to the Church of England now. But undoubtedly there are great difficulties; and, as undoubtedly, the bishops will never stir a finger to remove them: that must be left to Convocation. In the first place, field preachers must be a distinct class. They want remarkable physical gifts,—strength of body, a clear, loud voice, a commanding manner; then they want self-possession, presence of mind, knowledge of mobs, experience of what will tell, and that power of never being put down, which is worth almost all the rest together. And all these things must be kept in constant practice. A good field preacher cannot be made in a moment,—cannot be taken out of a

church pulpit, and set on a bench,—he must be formed to his task, and he must be kept in it. First, then, there is the difficulty of providing maintenance for these priests. But a far more serious difficulty remains to be grappled with,—the interference of the system with parochial rights. For we must not disguise from ourselves that such an interference there must and will be. To say that the darkest and most heathenish spot in the whole diocese is not to have a missionary preacher, because the incumbent of that spot will not, or cannot, attend to it himself, and will not allow any other labourer to enter on his portion of the vineyard, is simply to render the whole system nugatory. We have seen in our own time an incumbent of an overgrown parish,—one, too, that professes evangelical principles,—leaving hundreds and hundreds of his parishioners, year by year, in complete heathenism, and yet opposing the introduction of other more faithful labourers among those whom he had neglected. What has been, may be again. But if such objections, if such obstructiveness, are now to be allowed,—if souls are to perish because their priests will neither labour nor suffer others to labour, farewell to any hopes of reformation from a society of preachers. Yet, again, on the other side, if the bishop may

appoint any preacher to any parish he pleases, all parochial regulations and divisions are confounded, and a heterodox bishop may use a church engine to overthrow the faithful teaching of the orthodox parish priest.

To steer between these two dangers, seems to be a most fitting work for the Diocesan Synod. They would give the bishop power to appoint a missionary preacher in any place where the parish priest needed, and asked for, his assistance : where the parish needed it, and the priest refused it, it would be their duty to consider whether the necessity were such as to justify their interference, or whether it did not amount to such destitution as to render advisable the infraction of the ordinary jurisdiction of the parish. Thus we might avoid town-heathenism on the one hand, and, on the other, the unbridled freedom from the Ordinary, which always was a drawback, and which was often the ruin, of the mendicant Orders.

And, to turn from what might be forced on the reluctant, to what might be bestowed on the laborious, parish priest. Would he not, in a wild parish, such as those stretching over thousands of acres on the Cornish moors, rejoice that he had a fellow-labourer fitted and prepared for the task, sworn to go out into the highways and hedges, and

compel them to come in? Would not the Lancashire priest thankfully see the courts of the manufacturing town filled with an auditory that hitherto he had never been able to bring to his own church? Would he view such efforts with jealousy? Would he regard, even were it so, a more highly gifted, or more successful brother, with envy? Away with such narrow, such worldly thoughts! So the great battle which we fight against Satan be won, what matter who wins it? Only let us, each in our place, play the man, and whoever, in the eyes of the Church below, has the honour of the victory, we shall all have its glory, we shall all have its merit, in the Church above!

XIV.

CONFESSION.

“In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes.”—*Judges* xxi. 25.

THESE words were surely written for our consolation. Israel without a king, always powerless to enforce, often ignorant to discern, the law: assailed without, at discord within, a prey to the wildest disorders, a very scorn and derision to them that were round about, Israel was, nevertheless, the true Church of God; and as it was with her then, so it may be with us now.

When, some twenty years ago, the new reformation of the Church of England began, much that was in disorder was only so from disuse. If we discovered that the service of the Church should be a daily sacrifice, we had the Prayer Book to direct us in its use, and to exhort us to its performance. If we learned that, in the service

of God, it was expedient to divide the clerks from the laity, we had only to turn to the Rubric : " The Chancels shall remain as they have done in times past." If we awoke to the importance of the holy seasons of the Church, we were only carrying out in practice what the Calendar had always said in ink. And so far all was well and safe.

But other necessary points came upon us, pre-supposed, indeed, and implied by the Prayer Book, but of which, as to manner, place, and rites, the Prayer Book was wholly silent. The cause of this silence we may find another opportunity to discuss ; at present we are only concerned with the fact. For instance, we found the population of England quadrupled since the time of Elizabeth ; we found churches rising on all sides of us ; we found a general impression that some form of service ought to be used in their consecration. But what ? The Bishops, without a particle of authority, took one which happened to have been composed by Bishop Andrewes ; and this, naturally enough, *but making themselves thereby liable to grievous civil and ecclesiastical penalties*, they for the most part employ. I say *for the most part* ; for one, at least, refuses to use any form of consecration, as contrary to, or at least beyond, the intention of the Church of England.

So, in a far more important matter. Priests began to open their eyes to the fact that, in their ordination, these words were addressed to them, "Receive the HOLY GHOST. Whose sins thou dost remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained." That is, that the power of the keys was entrusted to them in as full and unlimited a manner as to the priests of any Church under the sun. At the same time, the laity awoke to the fact, that at each celebration of the Holy Eucharist, they were invited to open their griefs to the priest, and receive the benefit of absolution.

Simultaneously with all this, repentance of sins was preached in our pulpits as, for many and many a year, it had not been preached before. It was impossible to hear, without a stirring of heart and conscience, those divines who exposed the difference between the unreal, deceitful feeling that too often usurped the name of repentance, and that true repentance which shall, by God's grace, avail to forgiveness. Take, as a specimen, these two invitations to return to God—the one by a theologian of the past century, the other by one of our own day:—

"Reformation," says the former, "is never impossible; nor, in a strict sense, can it be said to be doubtful.

Nothing is, properly speaking, doubtful, which it is in a man's power to accomplish : nothing is doubtful to us but what is placed out of the reach of our will, or depends upon causes which we cannot influence ; and this is not the case with reformation from sin. On the other hand, if we look to experience, we are compelled, though with grief of heart, to confess that the danger is very great of a man who is engaged in a course of sin, never reforming from his sin at all. . . . Let the perception and commencement of this danger sink deep into the hearts of all who are in such a situation, as that they must either reform or perish. They have it in their power, and it must be now their only hope, by strong and firm exertion, to make themselves an exception to the general lot of habitual sinners. It must be an exception. If they leave things to take their course, they will share the fate in which they see others, involved in guilt like themselves, and their lives."

"Not, then, in this life," says the latter, "need any utter Esau's exceeding bitter cry, 'Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me? Hast thou but one blessing, O my father?' Thou needest not, then, weary soul, to sit down in heaviness and gloom, as though all were hopelessly lost, because thou hast squandered in a far country, far from GOD in thine affections, His first bright inheritance. Our FATHER is not so poor as to have one blessing only, nor are His many mansions opened to the redeemed of one sort only. Were it so, who could hope? Crippled, seared, distracted, weak, unstable, nay, polluted as thou mayest feel thyself, all, the least, is too hard for thee ; but what too hard for GOD's omnipotence? what too sick for the Heavenly Physician? what too sinful for Him to heal, Who 'was made sin for us, that we might be the righteousness of GOD in Him?' In thine own strength thou wentest astray ; not in thine own strength must thou return ; well is it if at last we feel our weakness, that so His strength may be made perfect in us. Fear not, then, lest the way be long ;

He thy LORD is thy way. Fear not lest thou faint by the way; He to Whom thou comest for heavenly food will not send thee away fasting. Fear not because thou hast, it may be, but the fragments of a wasted life to offer Him, for Whom too little were its earliest and best; He needeth not time, His own creature, to perfect those whom He maketh His, so that thou give up thyself now at the last, as the clay to the potter, to be unmade of what thou hast made thyself, remade by Him to that for which He made us. Hide thyself not, nor thy sins, like Adam, from Him. Hide thyself no longer wilfully under the defilements, the mire, the manifold vanities of this world, and He, the Eternal Wisdom, will, through them all, behold on the lost piece of silver His own kingly image and likeness; He will draw it forth and cleanse it, will retrace His own eternal form upon it, His own holiness, His purity, His righteousness, and will lay it up, rejoicing, amid His jewels in the everlasting treasury."

It is to be wondered, then, that they who were thus taught the burden of sin, should long and yearn to be rid of it?—that they who had learned the danger of trifling with conscience, should seek earnestly to flee from the wrath to come?—that when they heard our LORD's words, "Whose sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them," applied by the Church of England to her priests—that when, again and again, those priests besought them to open their griefs, and receive the benefit of absolution, they should believe Him That cannot lie, they should take His Church at her word, they should go to her priests, they should confess, they should be absolved?

The fury that this excited in the world, who among us can ever forget? Who can forget, in those awful months when Roman interference had frenzied England, how they saw, placarded on our walls, that fearful watchword, "NO ABSOLUTION!" "NO FORGIVENESS OF SINS!" glaring forth next to those plainer, yet scarcely bolder, blasphemies that proclaimed, "NO GOD!" or pointed out the church-path as "THE WAY TO HELL!" Yes; that poor trembling penitents should dare, by their self-humiliation, to condemn the easy-going negligence of careless men—should dare to acknowledge CHRIST'S highest commission in His priests—should come before them and confess their sins—should know and feel they were forgiven—this the world could not away with. It positively should not be. Nothing was too bad for the perpetrators. Platforms and newspapers, taverns and railway carriages, rang of the abomination; and in one pulpit, at least—however much or however little the sentiment was afterwards modified—the priest that received a confession was pronounced worthy of death.

It was an uncomfortable time for the bishops; for of course they were appealed to on both sides. One or two—though even they with many an *if* and a *but*—stood up for the faith. Balaam's words might justly have been theirs:—"Behold, they

have received a commandment to absolve, and they have absolved, and I cannot reverse it." But the greater part—what else could we expect?—temporised. *Ministerial* absolution, said they, is clearly the doctrine of the Church of England; of *sacramental* absolution she knows nothing. That is, any priest may say, "I absolve thee from all thy sins," provided he does not intend to aver that any authority of the sort ever was committed to him. Any priest, in short, is welcome to use the formula, provided he will first resolve it into a truism. And again, as if the natural instinct of man were to love self-humiliation—as if the danger were that he should feel sin too acutely, and lament it too strongly—as if the indignation and revenge of which the apostle speaks were vices, dangerous to the soul's health,—they were eager that Confession should not be too minute, should not be too regular, should not be too frequent. Men might write and preach "no forgiveness of sins," and we heard nothing in Episcopal charges; men might write also of Confession, so they only *wrote* of it. But let them once act on the power that the Church and the LORD of the Church had given them, and they were marked, suspicious, exposed to the indignation of Episcopal charges, unfaithful to the Church of England, and what not else?

But another class of bishops came forward,—at least more honestly and manfully, and avowed their intention of “putting down Confession.” It might be commanded by the Prayer Book, but it did not satisfy the public ; it might have been the means of snatching many a hardened sinner from perdition, but it was offensive to the world ; it might have been the consolation of mourners, and the comfort of the feeble-minded, but it was the scandal and the scorn of the rich and the powerful, and so it was to be “put down.” Put down ! But how ? Can a bishop prevent the sinner from feeling the burden of his sins ?—prevent him from seizing the plank after shipwreck ? Can a bishop stop the channel of that grace which the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls left as an everlasting heritage to His Church ? “Put down Confession !” Is there any one among us who, remembering the grace of GOD bestowed upon him at his ordination,—who remembering his vows there,—who, remembering the charge laid upon us to feed the flock of CHRIST, which He purchased at no less a price than the effusion of his own blood, and the horrible punishment that must ensue if we feed it not, will dare for one moment to be swayed by any such determination on the part of any earthly superior ? “Put down Confession !” It were

just as competent to a bishop to put down prayer, to put down Baptism, to put down the Holy Eucharist. Woe be unto us, if, out of false deference to Episcopal authority, any of those souls perish for whom CHRIST died !

These, however, are hindrances merely external, and, so to speak, physical. The practice and the system of Confession have—and had more than they have—greater difficulties to contend against than these. We all know with how great care the Roman priest, from a comparatively early age, is trained for the confessional. He has treatises, the fruit of centuries of experience, to direct him. The deepest learning, the highest spiritual wisdom, lies open before him. Scarcely a case can come before him, the solution of which he knows not where to seek. If any new difficulty arises, the counsel of his bishop is at his service ; and if that be not sufficient, the effective machinery of the Roman Church places ample direction within his reach. He can scarcely go wrong.

And what, of all this, have we ? We have the one great power of Absolution, which CHRIST gave us ; but what has man done for us ? We have, or we might have, the works of the great writers on conscience ; but we have not the living experience, the training, the routine : we must solve our diffi-

culties for ourselves, or leave them unsolved. As a body, all is new to us, all is strange; nay, even in the case of those individuals among us who have had most experience, how constantly is their defective learning forced upon them!—how often must they deplore their isolated position! And all these things have had their natural consequence. If we have had great difficulties to contend against, we have gross mistakes to own. We may mourn over them, we may be ashamed of them; but we are not, for one moment, to be discouraged about them. We have done what we could; nor can our difficulties and perplexities ever again be what they were at first.

The difficulties of which I have hitherto spoken have been in practice, rather than in theory; accidental, rather than essential. If the practice of Confession continues to extend as it has extended during the last five years, and if English priests study that science as they would any other branch of divinity, experience and learning will come. But there are two most essential difficulties not so easily to be got over.

The first is, the want of a ritual. We are to invite Confession,—we are to give Absolution,—so far, nothing is clearer. But in what form, and with what words? The sacramental formula itself is, it may reasonably be supposed, to be that given

in the Visitation Office. But is that to be all?— and if not, what else are we to employ?

The want of a ritual gives rise, of course, to the greatest difference of practice between English priests in the office of Confession. Some use no other form of any kind than the Absolution in the Visitation of the Sick. Some compose an office for themselves, of such penitential psalms and collects as they may think appropriate. Some take the Roman use, exactly as it stands.

It is, of course, much to be wished that there were an uniformity of practice in this respect. It may also be much to our shame that there is not. But, God be thanked, there is no fear of any possible vitiation of the sacramental efficacy by these variations. That, we know, is safe, provided the essential words, “ I absolve thee from thy sins, in the name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST,” be pronounced. And even in Churches of the Roman Communion, the rites vary a good deal; and the vernacular portion is scarcely the same in any two rituals of different countries. It would clearly seem our duty, till some further order be taken in the matter, to adhere to that which was the use of Sarum; and, manifestly, any established use is better than an office composed without any authority by a private priest.

But now comes a far greater difficulty. Where Confession is the absolute law of the Church, there can be no doubt as to the cases in which it may, and in which it may not, be received : it is binding upon all, and may, therefore, be received from all. But where, as among ourselves, it is only allowed and recommended—not enforced—a far wider range is opened for conflicting duties. A parent objects to it,—are we to encourage it in a child? A husband disapproves it,—are we to permit it in a wife? What degree of objections, what species of disapproval, is sufficient to warrant our refusing to receive a confession? In the case of a child, to what age has the parent the right of interference? Till Confirmation?—till the age of one-and-twenty?—as long as the child remains at home? Again; it is not known, only feared, that a parent or a husband would disapprove or forbid. What is to be done then? Are we to insist on the question being referred to the parent or the husband?—then we run the risk of tempting them, however ignorantly, to commit sin, by depriving the child or the wife of the means of grace. Are we to receive the confession without any such reference?—then we run the risk of inducing a course and a habit of deceit and disobedience. These difficulties we have to solve for ourselves, and that without any

assistance from books. There is no parallel case to which we can refer ; the responsibility is entirely our own ; and it is one that we ought not to be called on to bear. In one case only is the solution of such conflicting duties, I suppose, clear. On a death-bed, none of us, if he had the opportunity, would dare to refuse a confession, whatever authority might be opposed to it, whatever voice might forbid it. If *tunc cessat omnis reservatio*, according to the Roman rule, then also we are to disregard shackles which, at another time, may have their due and legitimate power.

Thus our position is one which, more than that of the priest in any other Church, needs rules ; while, less than the priests of any other church, we have them. We not only want education for the science,—we not only want a ritual,—but we want a system of casuistry adapted to ourselves, because the permissive use, or rather the recommendation, of a rite, differs widely—(and the difference branches out so extensively into details and circumstances)—from the enforcement of the same rite.

Meanwhile, it is surely most important that some one, or more than one, of those among us who have had most to do with Confession, should put forth an elementary treatise on the subject, for

the use of English priests. It should avoid the fatal error of taking too much for granted as already known. Probably the instances of ignorance among clergymen, anxious to do their duty in this respect, and eager to carry out the practice of the Church, would, were they attested, surpass belief. From my own knowledge, I could produce a list of omissions and commissions, which one should have thought a day's study of the subject ought to have been sufficient to prevent. The nature of Confession, of penance, of absolution—the posture, the words, the questions—every thing should be carefully and briefly explained. Next, it would be well to recommend some provisional form, till a ritual can be sanctioned by a competent synod. And, lastly, some kind of solution should be attempted to the questions to which I have referred above, and which must be solved, whether we will or not, one way or other. Surely it is better that the difficulty should be met by those best qualified to grapple with it, than that each individual priest should be left to meet it for himself, and in a way of his own.

But now we come to another danger connected with this matter. It is this: lest a sufficiently strong line should not be drawn between the practice of Confession, and the practice of Direction.

The one is as old as the Apostles—the other the invention of the last three centuries; the one is, though not in all cases necessary, in all cases highly expedient; the other, if sometimes expedient, certainly in many instances pernicious; the one, to persons in earnest, scarcely capable of abuse,—the other, the more scrupulous the conscience, the more likely to become a snare; the denial of the one, a virtual negation of the power of the keys; the denial of the other, a simple objection to priestly influence. No two things can—as Direction is generally understood—differ more than that system, and the intercourse which must necessarily exist between the priest and penitent. A certain kind of Direction, of course, there must be: the pointing out, for instance, besetting sins; the indications of remedies likely to be salutary for those sins; the recommendation of some particular good work, which may seem most in accordance with the wants on the one hand, with the opportunities on the other, of the penitent. But this is not what is usually meant by Direction. The recommendation of systems of devotion, plans of life, books, the regulation of intercourse with friends and acquaintances, to these things, and such as these, objection is principally, and, for the most part, not unreasonably made. It may

not be easy to set down in black and white the difference between that kind of advice which must necessarily occur in Confession, and that sort of Direction which has nothing to do with it. But so it often, in other cases, is very difficult to draw a philosophical boundary between two systems, where they combine, which are wide as the poles asunder in their general character and features. But, for a single definition, perhaps the advice which is necessary has to do with a decision between bad and good,—that which is always unnecessary, often inexpedient, between good and better. Nothing can be more important than to set permanently before English Churchmen this fact,—that with Direction of this kind, Confession has no necessary connection whatever. Incalculable mischief has arisen from the confusion of the two. Good men, for instance, who would never dare to breathe a syllable in depreciation of those supernatural powers of absolution which CHRIST has committed to us,—men who, I verily believe, would shed their blood in defence of the doctrine of the keys, nevertheless are continually expressing a hope that Confession may not be too frequent,—may be the exception, and not the rule. Why? Because, say they, individual consciences ought to be individually responsible,—because the repetition

of such intercourse tends to keep the soul in a kind of spiritual leading strings,—because there is a danger in shifting the burden of one's own conscience on to the shoulders of another; that is, they object to Confession, because they discover—and that with no inconsiderable degree of truth—danger in Direction. But if such men could be persuaded that there is no necessary connection between the two things, these objections would vanish.

I do not for a moment mean to say that there has not been, and that there is not, danger of the substitution of a Director for a Confessor. But what means of grace is without danger? If we are not to pray till we can preclude all risk of taking God's name in vain,—if we are to decline Holy Communion till we can annihilate the danger of receiving unworthily, we must live without prayer, and without the Blessed Eucharist. If, in the present case, there be danger of another, and that a far less fatal result, let us be on our guard against its approaches, let us clearly understand our ground; let us, in the present state of things, rather err by saying too little than too much. But, for God's sake, do not let us deprive the sinner of the plank after shipwreck, for fear that some, who can swim for themselves, may rather trust to the cork, than, under God, to their own strength.

And, as there is danger of Direction being engrafted on Confession, so also I cannot deny that, in some cases among ourselves, this system has prevailed, and its fruits have been apparent. We know how many, especially among women, in coming to Confession for the first time, come rather for direction than for absolution; look for the guide, rather than for the ambassador—desire the counsellor, rather than the priest. Details of domestic life, engagements in the world, plans of amusement, plans of study, the division of the day, the intercourse with friends—all these things are ready, if we do not resist the tendency, to be submitted to us; things which have not a right or a wrong; things which may be pursued in a thousand ways, the one as Christian as the other; things in many cases, respecting which the interrogator is likely to form a far more correct judgment than the priest. What have we to do with all this? Who hath required this at our hands? Yet this it is that sets English minds against auricular confession,—this that cuts so many off from one of the great means of grace.

I believe from my heart that, till we can re-introduce the system, we have made no effectual lasting progress. I go into my school. I ask one boy what are the chief cities of the tribe of Judah? I

inquire of another what it was that Benaiah the son of Jehoiada slew in the time of snow? I demand of a third who was the last prophet before the coming of our LORD? That is one kind of questions with which our national schools ring. More profitably, perhaps, I inquire for the seven corporal works of mercy?—I investigate how the poorest may perform each—I ask how our LORD set us an example of performing all? I get good answers or bad, as the case may be. But what do I know of the inner life of those children? What is it all but a head knowledge? What can I tell of their state before God? If one were struck dead at my side, could I form any rational idea of his preparation for the unseen world? In fact, does all the knowledge of Scripture facts and history, which we so sedulously infuse into our national scholars, assist in the least degree the development of their spiritual life? And not only this, but is it not taken as a substitute for it? Do we not talk of enlightened England, from a happy idea that such head knowledge is true enlightenment? Whereas, what do really zealous priests know—what *can* they know—without Confession, of the spiritual state of their schools?

That which comes nearest to it is preparation for Confirmation. Here, self-styled Evangelicals

and mere men of the world acquiesce in direct priestly individual intercourse, the intercourse of mind with mind, the removal of the barriers of etiquette, the questions and the answers, nay, the direction, which they suppose a system of Confession to involve. For instance, Evangelical clergymen have been found, ere now, to refuse a ticket for Confirmation, till a pledge has been given that the person to be confirmed will never attend a ball or a theatre. This, it is plain, is Direction in its most undisguised, and most stringent form. In this preparation for Confirmation we find all earnest-minded men, whatever phases of faith or of heresy they may hold, agreeing. Only the old marrowless, high and dry school, permit the opportunity to pass unimproved. I remember having heard a priest of this class give notice of a Confirmation, and preach on the subject. Examination, he said, and instruction were necessary for the candidates; examination and instruction he intended to give, but some kind of order and arrangement were also essential, in order that the occasion might be improved to the utmost. The arrangement would take some time (the arrangements of that class of divines usually do;) but it should be notified on the church doors. This, one would have thought, was to separate the candidates

into classes, according to ages, rank, and more especially sex ; and such an assortment would, at all events, be better than nothing. The lists came out, and, behold ! the principle was alphabetical. All, whatever their rank or sex, whose names began with the four first letters of the alphabet, were to present themselves on such a certain day, and so on.

Now, no man in earnest but must turn in sorrow from such a specimen of parochial arrangement. How, in such a mixed multitude, is it possible to press home any one truth ? What different instruction, for instance, the rich and the poor need on the eighth commandment ! How is it possible, where boys and girls are taken together, to do more than distantly allude to the seventh ? This kind of instruction has all the disadvantages, without the advantages, of a sermon.

But then, if Evangelicals and “ moderate ” men are agreed in recognising the benefits of this intercourse before Confirmation, why do they deny it to the continual superintendence exercised by mind over mind in the Confessional ? This is, indeed, giving up *the* great end of Confession, namely, Absolution ; but where a minor end, and that in a mutilated and imperfect way, is so blessed, why not in a more legitimate and authorised manner ?

Two priests, equally zealous, devote a certain

portion of their time to the care of their schools. The one opens with prayer, questions in the Catechism, interrogates the first class on the history of Elijah, and the second on that of Moses, and the third on that of our LORD; and after spending an hour and a half, returns home with a very comfortable notion of his efficiency. True, one of the boys who has distinguished himself above the rest, that morning stole a sixpence, which will be his first step in a downward course of dishonesty; true, one of the quickest and most intelligent among his girls has been hoarding up her money to purchase a piece of finery, which she will buy in the afternoon, and that finery will lead her, step by step, to her ruin. But what does he, what, with his present system, *can* he, know of all this? He moralises, on his way back, on the high privilege which England enjoys in its schools and in its education; and when, some three or four years hence, he learns that one of those whose blessings he thought so highly of is in prison for shoplifting, and another an outcast from her father's house, and from society, he will think, How little can means avail, without the grace of God! Undoubtedly; but he will not go on to inquire, *Had* these two guilty ones the means which they ought to have had? Does not the fault, in some degree, lie at his door?

For, let us turn to the other priest ; what does he feel of the manner in which his charge over those children is to be carried out ? He knows where the battle with the wickedness of their hearts is to be fought, and how. Not in the schoolroom, but in the church, or (more probably) in his own study ; not by learning that Jotham was the son of Uzziah, but by being shown how to resist, and encouraged till they overcome, the sin that doth so easily beset them. That priest will soon have heard the story of the stolen sixpence ; he will not be very long in finding out the covetous desire for finery. The sin is confessed—is confessed, if need be, openly, and the shame manfully borne—and it is forgiven. The intended purchase is not made ; the first step in the downward course is not taken, and the hour's work of the priest has, though he knows it not, saved two souls.

We know, as the Church of England now is, what will be the outward position and reputation of those two priests. The one, an influential man in the Diocesan Society, in habits of confidential intercourse with dignitaries, requested by influential personages to preach charity sermons high on the bishop's list for preferment ; the other, traduced as a papist in disguise, the favourite object of attack in the county paper, who must never expect any

thing besides his present living—a marked character, from whom dignitaries turn aloof, and whom the bishop, secretly or (if he dares) openly brands. He must wait for his reward. It will come then, when “they that be wise,” (and “he that winneth souls is wise”) “shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness” (and, therefore, they that keep many from unrighteousness) “as the stars for ever and ever.”

XV.

AGENDA FOR CONVOCATION.

THERE is always an advantage in shaping out the outlines, and mastering the landmarks, of controversies which are manifestly approaching. Relative proportion is best judged at a distance; the ground is more clearly understood before it is enveloped in the smoke and dust of battle. So it is now. We have been struggling for Convocation; we have been struggling for Synodal action; and we have all but got them. Let us, before we finally succeed, see to what new features of discussion they are likely to conduct.

Now, I assume that, in the present state of things, and for many years to come, no true churchman would propose any alteration in the Prayer Book. It would be so fearfully hazardous an experiment, that any possible good would be more than counter-balanced by probable evil. What he wishes to make more Catholic, others will wish to make more Protestant. If for the present Liturgy he would substitute that of the

first book of Edward VI., they would propose, as a more desirable reform, the formula of the so-called Evangelical Church in Prussia.

But that the same forbearance is to be observed in proposing additional offices for the Prayer Book, neither reason nor prudence seems to demand. This is according to the analogy of former times. Scarcely any change was made in the revision of 1662, but one whole, and most important, office was added. Let us see what are the additions which would suggest themselves as most likely to be practically useful, and as most feasible to be adopted,—additions, I mean, that every one must consider in themselves advisable, and to which no objection could be urged but the dead stupid weight of conservatism. Thus I exclude all consideration of the revival of those Catholic rites or practices which there is no undutifulness in saying were unfortunately lost in the Reformation; for instance, fulfilment of the commandment on Maundy Thursday, the unction of the sick, and the like. None of these could at present be introduced, without the danger of a schism. The battle of the Usages among the Non-jurors may, on this head, read us a salutary warning.

But there are additions which might be made, involving no principle except that of increased

usefulness ; and which are liable to no objection but that of letting well alone. I will first endeavour to answer this conservatism, and then point out a few of the additions which would most naturally present themselves to the consideration of a synod able lawfully and freely to discuss them.

Now, two elements are to be taken into consideration when it is said that the English Prayer Book is as perfect as we can hope to see a human composition, and that, therefore, all additions would be merely excrescences. Firstly, it was not intended by its compilers to be a stereotyped form ; and, secondly, if it had been, they could not possibly foresee the changed circumstances of the English Church.

It must be evident to all that there are continually to be found marks of haste in the construction of the Prayer Book, which would have been inexcusable had its compilers entertained any idea that, once published, it was to be all-sufficient and all-perfect. Why and how, at subsequent revisions, these were not altered, is a very different question. For example, the non-appointment of lessons for Ash Wednesday ; the occurrence of double lessons for Michaelmas Day ; the appointment of two lessons, the twentieth and twenty-fourth chapters of Ezekiel, as so particularly edifying that they

stand for lecture on a Sunday ; and the omission of the same two chapters, as so particularly unedifying that they are not worthy even of the ferial course ; the absolute going out of the way to omit the old and appropriate lesson for the Purification, which would have come in regular rotation ; and, above all, the jumble of chapters now forming our service in Holy Week. Indeed, here, perhaps, we find *hurry* written more palpably than in any other part of the service. The compilers were in a hurry to get rid of the Benediction of Palms ; and they forgot that they utterly omitted all allusion to one of the most important events in our LORD's earthly life, His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Again, they who, translating from Quignon, were so piteous in their complaints, that the godly and decent order of reading holy Scripture was broken in upon by multitudes of responds, verses, vain repetitions, and synodals, broke in on our LORD's Passion, on its most solemn days, by prayers for the Queen, the royal family, and so forth ; which being ended, we return to the Passion again. Again, as all mention of our LORD's entry has vanished from Palm Sunday, so His greatest gift to man is only incidentally mentioned on Maundy Thursday. And, till the last revision, there was no collect for the service of Easter Eve. All these things are in-

stances of what I am pointing out. So again, is the omission of any table for the settlement of the occurrence and concurrence of festivals; the omission of any form for excommunication, though excommunication is throughout implied; of any form for private confession and absolution, though so strongly recommended; of any form for the consecration of churches, and the like.

Again: a provisional Prayer Book—for at first it really was only that—devised for the use of four or five millions of people, educated ritually, and taking much for granted that is now lost, has become the stereotyped Prayer Book of a Church which ought to embrace a hundred and fifty millions of souls, a Colonial Church, a Missionary Church. One fruit of altered circumstances we already have had in the addition of the office for adult Baptism. One necessity more and more strongly pressed upon us is an office for the reception of Catechumens from heathenism or Mahometanism; an office also for the reconciliation of renegades and apostates, and for the admission of heretics and schismatics to the Church. Will any one say that these things are not necessities?

But now to turn our attention to matters more nearly concerning ourselves. Perhaps the want most absolutely pressing, certainly that which most

attempts have been made to meet, is the authorization of a Compline office. The ways in which men have tried to remedy this defect are satisfactory only thus far, as showing how strongly it has been felt. Sometimes we have the Litany, by permission of the Ordinary, said daily at a late hour; sometimes we have two evening services, the one in the afternoon, the other at night; the one sometimes choral, the other not so; the one sometimes with a sermon, the other without; oftener the two absolutely identical. Again, unless use had familiarised us to it, with what feelings should we have, on a bright summer's afternoon, at half-past three o'clock, nay, in one instance of which I know, at half-past one o'clock, "Lighten our darkness, we beseech Thee, O LORD: and by Thy great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night?" especially when about three hours before we have been joining in the prayer that, since we have been preserved to the beginning, we may be defended in the course, of the day. A proposal some time since was made to have the present evensong strictly for the evening, and to introduce an afternoon office for the afternoon—an idea utterly at variance with every ancient principle. For this service was not in any respect to be for the ninth hour, but simply a third office; so that

each of the great divisions of the modern day—morning, afternoon, evening—might have their appropriate office ; and still further to improve the matter, we were to have the Exhortation, Confession, and Absolution, a third time over ! Was ever such wearisome, such vain repetition !

No : whatever additions it may hereafter be proper to make, the present evensong must be Vespers, and can be nothing else ; and what we want is Compline. And why make a new office ? Why not take it exactly as it stands in the Sarum Breviary ? The Antiphons, indeed, to ensure conformity with the other services, might be omitted ; the *Confiteor* would probably be altered ; with those exceptions, what is there that need be touched ? Now, if one slight change in existing offices might be sanctioned, the Collect, “ *Lighten our darkness,*” would be removed to its proper place at Compline, and its place in evensong supplied by some of the varying “ *Memorials ;*” or, if that were too much to expect, by the Collect which we already have, “ *O Almighty Lord and everlasting God.*” Or, if it were desired to use a form which has already been partially authorised since the Reformation, there is the Compline drawn up by Bishop Cosin, inferior enough to the Sarum Service, but ready to hand. But supposing

the genuine office, with all its calm, quiet beauty, reintroduced; supposing it to be placed as late as there was any chance, with propriety, of obtaining a congregation, would not that quarter of an hour be a most inestimable addition to our ritual? would it not refresh many an one who, overwhelmed with worldly business, has scarcely the power to attend the other, and longer, services of the Church?

Let us proceed to another desideratum: the want of some rules, respecting the occurrence and concurrence of festivals. In one Church you shall hear the entire office of the Sunday; in another, the commemoration shall be of the Saint's day alone; and in another, there shall be a cento of both. I remember once asking a clergyman what Epistle and Gospel he meant to read on the then following Sunday, on which it happened that some Saint's day occurred,—“Why,” said he, “I must see which I like best.” Many priests, I firmly believe, have no better principle of selection, who do not so honestly confess their motive in decision.

Now these three questions arise:—1. Is there any right or wrong in the matter,—or is it an open question? 2. Has the English Church given any directions on the subject in her rubrics? 3. Have the bishops, who are authorised to explain difficulties in the regulations of the Prayer Book, pro-

nounced for any definite method of arranging the concurrence of Festivals? Let us take the last question first.

Some time ago, a Bishop laid down, in his charge, this rule: that when a Sunday and Saint's day shall occur, the Epistle and Gospel should be of the Saint's day; the lessons, of the Sunday; and that both Collects should be read. Now I say nothing at present of this canon's being utterly at variance with the very first principle of old Ecclesiastical arrangement on the subject. I will only say, that I think the Bishop would have been exceedingly astonished, had one of his clergy, in 1848, when Whitsun Day fell on S. Barnabas' day, read the Epistle and Gospel of the latter, and not of the former. I think, if Easter fell on Lady Day, or on S. Mark's, the Episcopal rule would astonish the congregation. Again: suppose S. Peter's day, or S. John the Baptist's, occurred with a Sunday after Trinity, how *can* the second lesson for the Sunday be read, when there is none? Again: let Holy Thursday occur with SS. Philip and James; how are we to be guided? Does the canon of the visitation charge hold at all?—or are we to say, that in this case Sunday stands for Thursday?

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publishes a calendar which, as it is supposed to come out under Episcopal superintendence, ought to settle the question. But it simply tells us what we knew before,—that such are the lessons for the Sunday and such for the Festival, and there it leaves us, with the old sentence, *Utrum horum mavis accipe*.

The next question is, Has the English Church spoken on the subject? Only in the rubrics prefixed to the State services—and these, of course, have no authority. English Churchmen were actually deprived of S. Barnabas' day, during a period of more than thirty years, in consequence of the accession of George II. having taken place thereon. The rubric in Prayer Books of that period, expressly orders that the office of S. Barnabas is to be entirely passed over. But it is a curious and not generally known fact, that an order in Council was obtained in the latter years of that king's reign, reinstating S. Barnabas, and translating the Accession to a later period.

What resources, then, have we? What did the compilers of the Prayer Book intend us to do? They surely did not mean to leave us to follow our own devices. If a man has a right to do so in one case, certainly he has in all. If I have a right to choose the Saint's day in preference to the Sun-

day, or the Sunday in preference to the Saint's day, on ordinary occasions, why not on every occasion ? Why may I not omit Easter in favour of S. Mark ? Why not Whitsun Day, or Trinity Sunday, for the sake of S. Barnabas ? Nay, I have heard of priests, who, Epiphany falling on Sunday, have chosen to consider it, so far as they could, the second Sunday after Christmas ; and who have actually, in similar circumstances, observed the Circumcision as nothing else but the first Sunday after Christmas.

Surely this is all very wrong ; surely such disorder is very far from having been their intention, who boasted that “ now henceforth there shall be only one use of saying throughout this realm.”

The fact is, that they were so perfectly acquainted with the old rule—it came so naturally to them—they were so thoroughly imbued with it—that they forgot, and very pardonably, how others would arise to whom the technicalities, the understandings, the traditional directions, with which they themselves were so well acquainted, would be utterly unknown,—would have to be acquired as a dead language—that the time would come when these rules must be revived, would be disputed, must be pleaded for earnestly. In the same way that no direction is given in our Prayer Book for

the priest to wear a surplice, none that the Psalms shall be said antiphonally, none that the Litany is to be said kneeling, none that the Epistle is read by the deacon—because it was assumed that all these things would be known—so neither were the rules for the concurrence of festivals written down, because it was assumed that the unwritten traditions would remain.

These rules, then, for a long time simply traditional, are now to be looked for in the *Dux Tabellæ Generales ex Rubricis excerptæ*, which are to be found in every office book.

All that has to be done in this respect, is—to authorise some such body of rules, and to appoint a standing committee, who, in case of any local difficulty, shall be authorised to settle the question.

But a point of far greater importance is—the necessity, felt more and more strongly every day, of the Reserved Sacrament. This does not of necessity involve the disuse, where the priest or the sick man shall prefer it, of the present system. But surely, to make the other permissive, would be to confer a great boon on the Church. I will first give the present practice of the Church of Scotland; not as being by any means perfect, but as being, in the first place, no mere theory, and in the second,

because it proves that there is no real discrepancy between the rite and the last clause of the 28th Article.

One of the rubrics following the Liturgy is this ; *The priest shall reserve so much of the consecrated gifts as may be required for the Communion of the sick, and others who could not be present at the celebration in the Church. And when he administers to them, he shall proceed as directed in the office for the Communion of the sick. The directions there given are as follows :—When the curate ministers to a sick person, of the reserved gifts, he shall begin with the words, As our Saviour CHRIST hath commanded and taught us, with the LORD'S Prayer, and shall then add the exhortation, Ye that do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins, with the Confession following : and, if he be a priest, may add the Absolution, and he shall then proceed to say the comfortable words of Holy Scripture, with the prayer of humble access, changing, if necessary, its beginning from These, Thy humble servants, do not presume, into This, Thy humble servant, doth not presume, with other similar changes. And, at the distribution of the holy Sacrament, he shall first receive the Communion himself, unless he hath done so that day already, and after minister to them that are*

appointed to minister to the sick, if there be any, and, last of all, to the sick person.

That the reserved Sacrament was the *more usual* method of administering the LORD'S Body and Blood to the sick in primitive times, no Ecclesiastical scholar will deny. The instance, for example, of Serapion, is a decisive proof for the middle of the third century. Neither will the candid controversialists of other Churches deny that the holy Eucharist was *sometimes*, during the primitive ages, even in times when persecution was not raging, celebrated in private houses. The English use is, therefore, not an unheard-of innovation on all ancient discipline.

Besides, the argument from its having been the usual course pursued by the primitive Church, the reserved Sacrament has plain and palpable advantages over the modern English use. Firstly, it precludes the irreverence, of which there is always so much danger, and which is sometimes almost unavoidable, in private celebration. It must give, it cannot help giving, (and as matter of fact, we know it does give,) very low ideas of the blessed Eucharist, the meanness of the furniture, the frequently and distressing character of the accompaniments of the rite ; and, if not itself absolutely contrary to primitive use, it often involves what is

utterly in opposition to the received practice both of the early and of the later Church, the celebration of the holy Communion more than once by the same priest on the same day. In an account published of the scenes which occurred during the prevalence of the cholera in Leeds, and of the labours then endured by its zealous parish priests, (labours, indeed, well rewarded at a later period, by the bishop of the diocese!) this point is brought out with great force; as well as the loss of time, of strength, of attention on the part of the dying man. And another consideration is not without its weight, namely, that if the parish priest be ill, or absent, his curate, if in deacon's orders, is, under the present system, useless with regard to the holy Eucharist. Once reserve the blessed Sacrament, and its administration is in his own power. And, though the Diaconate exists at present in little else than name, the day is probably not far distant when it will become an efficient body, and then the importance of the change will be more sensibly felt. Add to all this that there is absolutely no reason now—even to those who believe there to have been one at the Reformation—why the old system should not be employed. Surely our people are in very little danger of embracing *too* high, *too* exalted ideas

respecting the holy Eucharist. Everything—antiquity, reverence, care of the poor, the due appreciation of the nature of that blessed Sacrament—require the permissive use of the reserved gifts.

Another most important addition would be a rubric on the subject of lay baptism. It might, in the first place, contain a distinct recognition of the validity of all baptism, administered by whomsoever, provided only it be administered with water, in the name of the FATHER, the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST, and with the intention of doing that which the Church does. This would prevent the sad scenes occasioned by a refusal to recognise the validity of Dissenters' baptism, when men, with an ardent zeal for the Church, have nevertheless shown themselves utterly without knowledge as to the plainest teaching of that Church. It might also contain an exhortation to laymen, in case of extreme danger, and where a priest or deacon cannot be procured, to baptise the child themselves, specifying the exact manner in which the Sacrament is to be performed. This would prevent, in the first place, the death of many an infant without baptism, because a clergyman could not be procured; it would also put an end to the practice of applying, in the like case, to some dissenting

minister, under the idea that his baptism, if irregular, is valid, whereas a layman's would be invalid. This idea requires the most strenuous rooting up, and in no other way could it be easily done. Up to the beginning of the 18th century, lay baptism, in case of necessity, was recognised by the English Church as a pious act, and many such an entry as the following occurs in parish registers:—the extract is from that of Eltham in Kent—"A man child of John Grace, born, baptised by the midwife, of necessity, and buried the 19th of January, 1605." And the visitation article of the seventeenth century frequently inquires whether the midwife has baptised any infant, *except* in a case of necessity. And the oath administered to such persons, as well after as before the Reformation, contained among other things, the following: "*Et quod in ministratione Sacramenti Baptismatis, necessitate imminente, utitur verbis aptis et consuetis sacramenti prædicti, vel similibus in effectu: I chrysten thee, N., in the name of the FATHER, and of the SONNE, and of the HOLYE GOOSTE, et nullis aliis prophanis verbis; et quod tempore necessitatis in baptizando infantem natum et profundendo super illum aquam, utitur pura aqua et non aqua rosea, vel rosacea, aut damascena de damasco, vel ex aliqua alia confectione*

facta vel mixta, et quod certiorabit curato ecclesiæ . quiddam erat factum in omni baptismo hujusmodi."

Till such baptisms are again allowed, it cannot but be, in large parishes, that children sometimes die unbaptised ; and what subject more important than this can occupy the attention of Convocation ?

These are examples of great and important principles, which might, and indeed must, come very soon before Convocation. Let us now shortly consider a few details which might also profitably occupy its attention.

Can it be doubted that we want, in the first place, Collects, Epistles, and Gospels, for a variety of circumstances in which the celebration of Holy Communion might be desirable or comforting ? It is recommended by an express rubric in the office for marriage ; yet, however inappropriate (and sometimes they are *very* inappropriate), the Collect, and Epistle, and Gospel of the last Sunday must serve anyhow again. So at funerals. Here the First Book of Edward VI. supplies, and admirably supplies, our wants. But, besides these mere necessary things, why may we not have communion offices for the sick, for travellers, in time of war, for benefactors, and the like ? In the last revision, some such intercession was found to be necessary. Before that, it was made irregularly, as is now

sometimes the case, in the Litany; but for a thanksgiving, on any occasion, a mutilated form of the Thanksgiving after Child-birth was, in some cases, employed. From one or two hints to be gathered from the lighter literature of the day, it may, I think, be conjectured that the insertion of private thanksgiving and supplications was—most righteously—insisted on by the Puritan party. Anglican stiffness could not reject it. But if the bishops had given it the direction of fresh Communion offices, what good they would have effected for the Church!

Take another detail. Every one must have felt how utterly and painfully inappropriate are, in many years, the lessons for Passion and for the beginning of Holy Week. On the Monday and Tuesday of Holy Week, you may, for instance, read of the Resurrection, and of our LORD's subsequent appearances to His Apostles; or, on the former day, of the Ascension, and, on the latter, of the Descent of the HOLY GHOST. Passion Week may begin with the Resurrection and proceed to the Incarnation, or may be totally occupied with the Acts of the Apostles. Surely a remedy for this evil would not be very difficult.

Again: In the Introductory Sentences is there one single verse appropriate to a common Sunday,

much more to a festival? How lugubrious is necessarily the opening of the Easter Matins! and how erroneously has instinct—a true, though irregular instinct—prefixed, in many churches, a Hymn of Praise to the doleful commencement of the service of God! The American Church has, at all events, here made some little improvement. In her Prayer Book we find such sentences, for example, as “The Lord is in His Holy Temple; let all the earth keep silence before Him.” Assuming that the sentences must be retained, at all events they might be made to serve the use of Antiphons, by appropriating most of those we have to the services of Lent; by giving “Repent ye, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand,” and others like it, to Advent; and by selecting proper verses for Christmas, and Epiphany, and Easter, and Whitsuntide. Then we should not, as now, go on till the First Lesson, on Maundy Thursday *e.g.*, and Easter Monday, without the slightest difference in the office.

And still more easily might the use of the Te Deum be forbidden in Lent and Advent; the employment of the Evangelical Canticles made compulsory, with very narrow exceptions; and the material we have would thus be worked into more effective order.

One more labour for Convocation I will mention, and will only mention—an English Hymnal—its words, its tunes, its order, grounded, as the Prayer Book, on its Sarum predecessor. That such an attempt will, ere long, be made, seems more than probable. Its peculiar nature considered, it is to be trusted that the first will only be considered a provisional edition.

And when Convocation shall actually meet, will it not authorise the use of a Prayer for itself? Had such an intercession existed in the Prayer Book, perhaps its illegal suppression would never have taken place. In the mean time, till the day of its assembly shall come, our private prayers, at least can be earnest for it. Now we must still say, “Turn our captivity, O LORD, as the rivers in the south.” The time will assuredly come when we shall add, “They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.”

APPENDIX A.

ORATORIANISM.*

From an article in the "Ecclesiastic," 1851.

ORATORIANISM is a feature of the Anglo-Roman Church, the results of which it seems utterly impossible to predict. It differs, not only from the Primitive and Mediæval Church,—that everybody knows,—but from the modern Church—the Church of Trent, of Pius V., of Benedict XIV. It seems to be destined to give a new development to the system of Liguori, and to expand the worship of S. Mary into something which the world has never yet seen. For, be it remarked, we are not commenting on particular expressions, on individual prayers, on sentences picked here and there; we are referring to the general tone and teaching of the Oratorian religion.

* See p. 49.

The centre of this, in the new system, is S. Mary. The strongest phrases of such Saints as Bernard and Bonaventura, expressions used by them to the ever Blessed Mother of God in an ecstatic rapture of devotion, are here brought forward and exaggerated, for what? For the every-day devotions of ordinary men, and of converts, words which S. Bernard would not have dared to utter, are almost forced into the mouths of those who must be fed with milk, and not with strong meat.

Connected with this, is the worship of S. Joseph. He is now made to occupy a place in the mind and prayers of the Church which was utterly unknown to the Middle Ages. . . .

Now, all these devotions, absolutely unheard of till within the last half century—how are they now brought forward? It is not as if they had come down to England by old hereditary tradition: it is not as if they were to be offered to children or peasants; it is not even as though they were intended for the enthusiasm of Italians or Portuguese. No, they are thrust forward on cool, reasoning, unimpressible England; they are held up as the means of saving the heathenish thousands of London, men sharp enough to see the littleness, the puerility, the affectation, the inanity of such devotions. What shall we say to these

things? Is such a course of proceeding anything less than giving great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme? What will the English mind, so proverbially downright and straightforward, think of such novelties in such doggrel? What of such absolutely sensuous devotions? For example, the Oratorians thus address our LORD: . . .

“While Thou art clasping Mary’s neck
In timid tight embrace,
The boldest seraphs veil themselves
Before Thine infant Face.”

And yet again :

“When Joseph takes thee in his arms,
And smooths Thy little cheek,
Thou lookest up into his face,
So helpless and so meek.”

Wonderful indeed, that these Oratorian converts should think that teaching, perhaps allowable for a child of three years old, is to be the discipline and devotion of men !

Again, that which the latter Roman Church has always felt to be its weak point—indulgences,—is here dragged forth, exhibited with a boast, trumpeted in penny books, parodied as offensively as may be,—an absolute challenge to Protestant irreverence and sceptical blasphemy. . . .

The Oratorian use of the vernacular language is

well known. On this we have again to remark,—if such a change be expedient and good now,—how can the great Roman controversialists of the sixteenth century be excused for their intense hatred to and bitter attacks against it then? We are not saying which is right,—but clearly both cannot be so. And we must say that we never felt more inclined to admire the reverent language of our English Prayer-Book, than after such expressions as those of King William Street English. Imagine a prayer, and that too one to which two hundred days of indulgence are attached, commencing thus :—“With that profound respect with which faith inspired me, O my God and SAVIOUR, &c.—I adore Thee!” The vernacularity, so to speak, of the whole devotions is singular. Thus we read of an Our FATHER, a Hail Mary, and an Out of the Depths. How thoroughly unlike mediæval England! Every one has read of such epitaphs as :—

“I pray you alle to saye ffor mee
A Pater Noster and an Ave.”

And even the names of our City streets and lanes showed that these expressions were familiar as household words. But apparently eager to have

no possible connection with the English Church of the earlier times, the Oratorians have changed all that. . . .

The devotion of the Sacred Heart of JESUS and of Mary is also put forward. Is it possible that this worship,—never publicly professed till 1685,—equivocated about a hundred times,—the original device of the enthusiastic temperament of a nun, and connected with bodily disease,—can really be expected to make its way into England? A sensual French idea absolutely forced on the cool reasoning English nation! Truly the infatuation of those who thus act is scarcely to be explained by natural causes.

And this must be remembered: either these devotions of the Sacred Heart, of the patronage of S. Joseph and S. Philip,—these doggerel hymns, these vernacular irreverences, are essentials or not. If they are, the Roman Church was without essentials of a mission till within a century and a half. If they are not, what words, supposing the Roman Church alone to be Catholic,—what words can express the awfulness of the woe that must descend on these Oratorians, for hindering to the utmost of their ability the return of the wandering, by the stumbling-blocks which they lay

in the road, which they exaggerate, which they multiply?

If Rome had not in a great measure lost her once wonderful tact these men would be put down to-morrow. But what the Jesuits were in 1688, that the Oratorians, without rebuke, are becoming now.

APPENDIX B.

ANTI-CONFESSIONAL AGITATION.*

From an essay in the "Christian Remembrancer." 1859.

IT is impossible to commence an article on *the* subject of the day without a deep sense of the responsibility which attaches itself to our task. The question is, beyond all others, surrounded with difficulty. It brings us into contact with those who make the outcry against the Confessional their pretence in a crusade against all earnest religion :—with those who see in it only the means by which they may acquire increased popularity as mere Protestant agitators :—with those, and they are many, who, earnestly religious themselves, tremble at what they regard as an unauthorized interference with God's one vicegerent, Conscience, and an unhallowed intermeddling with family rela-

* See p. 246.

tions, themselves of divine authority :—with those, finally, who behold in the whole system a wretched Anglican imitation of a Roman sacrament, a sham which exposes, beyond anything else, the utter hollowness and unreality of the Establishment. In how large a proportion of English households is the subject of Confession at this very moment a cause of discord and misery ; or a Camarina which children and parents instinctively feel must remain unmoved ! Again, what endless *views* find their different exponents in every newspaper and periodical ! what countless meetings contribute their quota of folly, scurrility, and passion to the general torrent ! We will endeavour to throw ourselves, as far as we can, into the various points of view which the opponents of Confession take, only too thankful if we can remove any objections to that which it ought to be, and point out some not unimportant modifications of that which it is.

Now, the first thing that must be patent to those who look calmly at the present agitation is this :—that it is an awful struggle between the principle of goodness on the one side, mixed up with however much of infirmity, shortcoming, folly, or occasional sin ;—and that of evil on the other, however much it may at the outset attract to itself real earnestness and unmistakeable piety. What we mean is this :

that Confession is, as far as the mere consideration of the term goes, an attempt to grapple with sin. It is an appeal for religion against the world. And so even bystanders view Confession: that it really does succeed in combating sin, let Mr. Thackeray, whose testimony we relegate to a footnote,* be sufficient witness. About one hundred years ago England was rent, if not to the same, at least in a very similar, degree by the great contest between vital religion, under whatever form,—Evangelicalism, Wesleyanism, and the like—and worldliness, whether under the appearance of High Church apathy, of the old squirearchy, or of downright sensuality. Men like Venn, Cadogan, Walker of Truro, Simeon, Newton, Scott, preached the necessity of repentance to the forgiveness of sins—preached it with many a blunder, in conjunction with much that was mistaken, but preached it at the peril of their reputation, their property, sometimes of their life itself. They preached it, whether the world would hear, or whether it would refuse;

* "In the midst of their gaiety, it must be remembered that the Irish are the chastest of women. . . . One has but to walk through an English and Irish town, and see how much superior is the morality of the latter. That great terror-striker, THE CONFESSIONAL, is before the Irish girl, and sooner or later her sins must be told there."—*Irish Sketch-Book*, vol. i. pp. 112, 224.

and in the end, the truth that was in them made itself heard. They preached it when they could reckon up "Evangelical" ministers by units;—they continued till those ministers were numbered by thousands.

The comparison is a rough one, but there is a sufficient resemblance in it. Religion now, as John Bunyan says, walks in her silver slippers: the world has, after a sort, become religious: people talk about faith and repentance, subscribe to religious societies, thank God for the spread of true Gospel truth, leave tracts in their districts, while all beneath is as hollow and unreal as the apples of Sodom. And herein is the worldliness of the nineteenth, worse than that of the eighteenth, century. That was not ashamed to seem what it was,—worldly to the backbone: its favourite text, "Be not righteous overmuch:" objecting to religion because it was religion: condemning it because those that were of the earth ought to be earthly. Modern worldliness takes its *standpoint*, as the Germans would say, on religion: it proclaims itself Protestant, and its opponents are Popish: professes itself the champion of faith, and them clinging to dead works. A religious, self-deceiving worldliness—ten times as dangerous, because ten times as disguised, as the other.

England awakes from a religious sleep,—and what does she find? She finds, on the one hand, her huge manufacturing towns, her iron-producing counties, her cotton-marts, her metropolis itself, so far as its poor are concerned, in a state of neglect and practical heathenism which professing Christianity never previously knew. On the other hand, she finds, but more especially in her middle and upper-middle classes, a panting and yearning after a life holier than that of average Christians, such as she has never seen, to take it at the least, since the Wars of the Roses. And she finds, in consequence of two such opposing influences, a need expressed, a cry raised, for Confession.

We build churches, we map out districts, we multiply services, but still we cannot reach the soul: we do not, or we only rarely, convert souls. We want to get at the poor, and we find the rich; we want to stop the huge scum of wickedness that seethes up to heaven, the drunkenness, the blasphemy, the wife-beating, the infidelity,—above all, the “great social evil,”—and all our churches and all our clergy seem, on the old system, to bring us very little nearer to the goal. No! we must have something which will put the soul of the pastor in real, naked contact with that of the sinner, which will enable him to say, “*You have done all this,—*

but there is pardon; you *are* tempted in such and such a way, but there is strength;" and we come to Confession. Again, on the other hand: there are those who have been endeavouring for years to lead the life of the righteous, to deny themselves, to become more and more holy, till they find every sin a serious burden, till they cannot rest until every possible means has been resorted to to remove its guilt and its taint. And so we come to Confession again.

What would the spirits of Venn, and Walker, and Grimshawe say, could they behold their degenerate successors actually alluring men, at the very time of life when their passions are most vigorous, when their curiosity is most active, to taste of the poisoned cup? What would be said, what would be thought, of a public lecturer who should extract passages from the writings of physicians? who should investigate their accounts of the most loathsome and humiliating diseases to which poor mortality is subject,—and on this description found a charge against their moral character! We very much doubt whether the law would not take hold of so vile an offender against morality. And where is the difference between the two cases? It is a known fact that the authors of some of the works intruded at Anti-Confessional

meetings on the inflamed and gloating imaginations of unbridled youth, never took pen in hand for their composition without some such safeguard to their own fancy, as a painful application, such as blister, or mustard-plaster, to the head or feet. They knew that mental, as well as bodily, diseases require a cure ; but they knew the danger of meddling with that cure ;—and they shielded themselves from it. Their calumniators spread wholesale among the mob topics which *they* would not approach without prayer and self-discipline.

Dr. M'Neile was asked to take the chair at a grand Protestant demonstration.

The deputation that waited upon me did me the honour to say they would not consent to hold the meeting unless I would promise to be in the chair, and I understood that to mean that they wanted me to make a speech ; and when I promised to come to the meeting I felt that I was thereby pledged to do something more than take the chair. I have now done that something more, and now I will take the chair.

The man came down to lecture on Confession ; and by that very profession assumed, at least, to know something about it. He manifestly thinks that secrecy is of the essence of Confession. Thinks so ? He says so. For observe ; he gives a definition of auricular confession,—and expressly makes secrecy a part of it.

By auricular confession is meant confession of sin by some individual, male or female, into the ear of a priest, no third person being within hearing at the time. *This is essential to it.* It is secret, and the seal of the secrecy is inviolable. Without this it would be powerless. It would lose all its mysterious solemnity.

If Dr. M'Neile had ever looked into any systematic treatise on Confession, he would have found some such chapter as—*Quinam obligantur sigillo sacramentali*—"who are bound by the sacramental seal." And one of the answers is, "*Illis coram quibus confessio facta est propter necessitatem, e.g. in incendio, naufragio,*" &c. "They, in whose presence the confession is necessarily made; as for example, in a fire or a shipwreck."

Now, then, Dr. M'Neile, is secrecy "ESSENTIAL TO" confession, or not? How then, in the name of common honesty,—in the name of ordinary fair dealing,—did you venture to tell those two thousand people what you must have known to be untrue?

"But I did not know it."

How, then, did you pretend to have the slightest understanding of the first principles of the subject about which you have been teaching for years,—on which you have been giving yourself out as an authority?

What then? Did the Church of England really mean that this confession was to be before by-

standers? That it *may* be so, never can be questioned; and how often one has heard the broken voice of the poor penitent (especially to a wife), "Don't go; I should like you to know all." But, were the case as our lecturer says, we should conclude that, in an Office formed completely on the model of the ancient services, it was taken for granted, as it is by them, that the desire of the sick man—if it were his desire—would be attended to, and he himself, during that particular part of the service, left alone with the priest.

But, oddly enough, this very objection of Dr. M'Neile's does seem to have occurred to the compilers of the Office—and *they obviated it*. We can hardly believe that, if the objection struck him, he could have failed to see how it was removed. Did he ever observe the rubric, "*These words before rehearsed may be said before the minister begins his prayer, as he shall see cause?*" *Before he begins his prayer*—what does that mean? Before the service commences at all; it can have no other signification. What *words before rehearsed?* The examination which precedes, and is in fact the foundation of, the confession. So, if we are to be as strict rubricians as Dr. M'Neile has now become, we have here an especial rubric on behalf of "auricular confession."

In the next passage we shall quote, he is commenting on the invitation before the Holy Communion, and thus he writes :—

Let him open his grief, “that by the ministry of GOD’S Holy Word”—by the Scriptures which apply to his case, wisely and discreetly brought before him—“he may receive the benefit of absolution ;” the benefit of having GOD’S truth openly declared and pronounced to him.

Those who take the view of Dr. M’Neile and his followers prove, clearly enough, that no possible formula can express a truth so strongly that it will not want re-stating, amplifying, iterating, under different expressions in the lapse of ages. Let us calmly look at the facts as they stand.

We know that, at the period of the Reformation, auricular confession was compulsory once a year, and necessary at every reception of the Holy Communion.

We know that, in the first Prayer Book of Edward VI., while the Church carefully laid down the maxim that auricular confession was not to be compulsory, it was left free to any man ; it was rather recommended than not, and a form was provided for it.

We know that, between that epoch and the last revision of the Prayer Book, while several changes had been made, the only one of importance sub-

stituted, on the occasion of illness, an exhortation to confession, instead of leaving it as before to the sick man's entire option.

We know that the present state of things is this:—

α. At Ordination, the Power of the Keys is given to the Priest in as full a manner as it ever was, or ever could be, bestowed. “Whose sins thou dost forgive,” &c.

β. That, before any celebration of the Holy Communion, those who decline to receive are invited, “if they cannot quiet their own mind,” to receive absolution.

γ. That every dying man is to be “moved” to confession.

Further, we know that for the century and a half succeeding the Reformation, auricular confession is upheld as in many cases useful and salutary by nearly all “the great Anglican divines:” that it was boldly complained of by the Puritans: that there was never the slightest disposition to modify its practice: that a canon stipulated expressly for the inviolability of its seal: that, as matter of history, Laud was appointed confessor to the Duke of Buckingham as formally as a clergyman might be appointed domestic chaplain to a nobleman now-a-days: and that the only difference

acknowledged by English divines between English and Roman confession lay in the one question of compulsion. Further, we know that, even in the eighteenth century, a deathbed confession was, by worldly men, simply looked at as a thing *comme il faut*: Henry Fielding is ample witness to this.

But this is not all. The 19th canon of the Irish Church, enacted in 1634, re-enacted in 1711, is as decisive as any averment can well be. Observe:—it not only allows confession,—it not only recommends it to the sick,—but it commands the priest to press it on the consciences of his parishioners before every celebration. This most important document has certainly not received the attention it merits; and we recommend it to especial attention, the rather that the Irish Church and the Irish Clergy are objects of the especial sympathy of our Protestant friends. In 1634, the Archbishops were: the primate, Ussher; Dublin, Bulkeley; Cashel, Hamilton; Tuam, Barlow. Thus, Ussher, the great “Protestant” champion, was actually at the head of the Irish Church when this stringent canon was passed. In 1711, the Archbishops were: the primate, Marsh; Dublin, King; Cashel, Palliser; Tuam, Síngé.

Whereas every lay person is bound to receive the Holy Communion thrice every year, and many notwithstanding

do not receive that sacrament once a year: we do require every minister to give warning to his parishioners publicly in the church at Morning Prayer the Sunday before every time of his administering the Holy Sacrament, for the better preparation of themselves. Which said warning we enjoin the said parishioners to accept and obey under the penalty and danger of the law. And the minister of every parish, and in cathedral and collegiate churches some principal minister of the church, shall the afternoon before the administration give warning, by the tolling of the bell or otherwise, to the intent that if any have scruple of conscience, or desire the special ministry of reconciliation, he may afford it to those who need it. And to this end the people are often to be exhorted to enter into a special examination of the state of their own souls; and that finding themselves either extreme dull or much troubled in mind, they do resort unto God's ministers, to receive from them as well advice and counsel for the quickening of their dead hearts and the subduing of those corruptions whereunto they have been subject, as the benefit of absolution likewise by the Power of the Keys which CHRIST hath committed to His ministers for that purpose.—*Canon XIX.*

Now we freely confess that we do not exactly understand—and we could never find any one who could explain to us—the meaning of the Parliamentary phrase, “The United Church of England and Ireland.” But it can scarcely mean less than this: that what is enjoined by the one, is not forbidden by the other Church. Now see what it is that the Irish Church recommends. She recommends confession to those who are “*either* extreme dull, *or* much troubled in mind.” The only persons¹

then, whom she would exempt from this duty are they who have so exactly attained the *via media*, as neither to be too much cast down nor too little affected: neither inclined to despair, nor to presumption: neither despising the chastening of the LORD, nor fainting when rebuked of Him. Undoubtedly, there are some such persons. But who would think better of a man's state before God for believing that he was one of them? No; the sweep of this net is as wide as it well can be. Are you troubled with no especial grief for past sins?—You *may be* “extreme dull.” Are you weighed down with secret sorrow?—You certainly *are* “much troubled in mind.” In either case, you are exhorted to confess.

And notice another fact. The change, as we have seen, in the phraseology of the Communion exhortation has given much subject of argument to our friends. It *was*—“Let him come to me, or to some other discreet and learned priest, taught in the law of God, and confess and open his sin and grief secretly, that he may receive such ghostly counsel, advice, and comfort, that his conscience may be relieved, and that of us, as of the ministers of God and of the Church, he may receive comfort and absolution to the satisfaction of his mind,” &c. It *is*,—“Let him come to me, or to some other

discreet and learned minister of God's Word, that he may receive such ghostly counsel, advice, and comfort, as his conscience may be relieved, and that by the ministry of God's Word he may receive comfort and the benefit of absolution."

Here, say they, the case is plain. Absolution means—not that formula of the remission of sins which you have usually considered it to signify—but "The having God's Word openly declared and pronounced." Well, then; here, in this Irish canon, there is not a word about "The ministry of God's Word." No: it is "The benefit of absolution, by the power of the keys." Which also disposes of a smaller mare's-nest. In the first Prayer Book of Edward VI. the penitent was invited to receive absolution; in our present exhortation he is called to partake the *benefit of* absolution: that is, the true "declaration" of God's forgiveness, instead of the "human remission used in the times of ignorance." This Irish canon cuts away that ground; uniting the phrase, "The benefit of absolution," with the most ecclesiastical phraseology in regard to the power of the keys.

These various documents can hardly be regarded as less than a set of bulwarks erected in defence of one characteristic of a true Church, according to Parker and his fellows: "Ecclesia Christi est, in

quâ purum Dei verbum prædicatur et sacramenta juxta Christi ordinationem administrantur : *et in quâ clavium auctoritas retinetur.*" What would Queen Elizabeth, the new Protestant saint, have said on this point to the anti-confessional agitators, when the authority of the keys was one of her *articuli stantis aut cadentis ecclesiæ* ? Marvellously, marvellously far, has Protestantism drifted from its original moorings !

Two questions of unanswerable importance have to be discussed, with those who hold that the practice of the English Church is in favour of confession—the one its frequency ; the other its totality.

As to the first. Most true, say many of the so-called defenders of confession, most undeniable, that the Church of England teaches absolution, teaches confession, but as the exception, not the rule : it may be sometimes, it is not to be often ; occasional confession she approves, habitual confession she dislikes. Now two questions ought carefully to be kept distinct, which are too often confused together. We are not going to lay down a trenchant rule either way ; we do not say that everybody who confesses ought to confess habitually, nor do we say that nobody ought to confess habitually. If spiritual conditions differ, so ought spiritual remedies to differ. We speak now only

of the law of the Church of England. A man has a perfect right to disapprove of habitual confession, to argue against it, to point out its evils, its possible abuses; to say that it interferes with the proper functions of conscience; to maintain, especially in what is called *direction*, that it enervates the intellect: but he has no right to say that the Church of England pronounces an opinion one way or the other. There is absolutely nothing, from one end of the Prayer Book to the other, which bears on the subject. We have no more right to say that she discourages frequent confession, than that she would have it weekly. We have allowed it to be said, till those who say it have really come to believe it, that "the spirit of the Church is against it."

When, then, the Bishops, so generally, speak of habitual confession being discouraged by the English Church, the question may be fairly asked, Where? Many will take the stand which Pascal and his associates held with regard to the five famous propositions,—If they are in the *Augustinus* of Jansenius, they can be shown there; show them us, and the controversy is at an end. In like manner it will be argued, If the Church of England discourages frequent confession, she must do so *somewhere*; show the passage, and

obedience will follow. In the meantime, men cannot be blamed for not obeying a law which cannot be pointed out. You say that she discourages it: it is replied that she neither pronounces for nor against it; that she leaves the frequency or the rarity to the especial case; and on that assertion people will act, and will go to confession habitually, if the exercise is found to be to their soul's health, till the passage forbidding it can be discovered.

It has been not unfairly asked :—

It would have been well had the Bishop stated what “these rare and exceptional cases” are; I do not understand to what he alludes. Does he mean before the reception of the sacrament? but that must be three times in the year at the least, and many persons receive it much oftener. Does he refer to sickness? but that happens to most men often in their lives; and surely the spiritual exercises lawful and profitable then are as much so in health. Does he allude to the case of a disquieted conscience? but in persons with strong religious feelings, the conscience is very often disquieted, and ought to be so in others who have them not.

The assertion of the Bishop is, I think, shown to be without foundation by the authorities I have previously adduced. But there are other reasons which concur to prove this.

1. It will be observed that the directions in the Prayer Book, and in so much of the preceding Canons as remain in force, are without any restriction or limitation whatever in point of time, and are entirely affirmative. But it is a well-known rule in logic, that you cannot draw a negative restricted or limited conclusion from an affirmative and un-

restricted premise. So here the proposition being, that whenever a person before Communion is disquieted in conscience, whenever he is sick, he may confess: you cannot from this deduce any conclusion whatever as to any time when he is *not* to confess. The test is easy. Suppose a person to be a weekly communicant, to continue that habit for years, to have a very tender conscience, and consequently before each Communion to be disquieted in conscience, and to seek to have his mind quieted, by opening his grief, and confessing his sin to another according to the precept of S. James,—could it be contended with success that this habit was not sanctioned by the Church of England? I think not.

But further, a *minimum* being recommended or directed, is no exclusion of a *maximum*, but rather presupposes it. Thus in the Westerton case, the direction to cover the Communion Table with “*a carpet of silk or other decent stuff*” was held to authorise several carpets of various colours to be put upon it at different and set times. “It is consonant to law,” says Lyndewood, “to affirm that this mode of speech in the singular number, contains in itself the plural also.” If I am recommended to attend Church on Sundays, does that therefore discountenance my attendance during week days? If the law compels me to go a mile, that is no reason why I should not go twain. When I am asked to give alms at the Offertory, that cannot imply that I am not to give alms at other times. So neither does the recommendation to “open griefs” to a “Minister” before Communion.

Of far greater importance is the totality of confession, by which we mean the question, whether one sin may be confessed by itself and absolved by itself. And here, again, writers like Mr. Newland, and divines of his ingenious school, unhesitatingly answer, Yes. Now, were it not for one little word,

we should say that, at first sight, the phraseology of the Prayer Book is on their side, so far at least as the exhortation in the Communion Service is concerned. Did we take the words as they stand there, without any further inquiry, we might be disposed to conclude that one "weighty matter" might be confessed alone, and be absolved alone. And we know that, in point of fact, this is a very common practice. A man is troubled in mind for some especial sin—perhaps as often as anything else, dishonesty—summons up courage, goes to his clergyman, confesses it; and the chances are that, if that Clergyman be a "High Churchman," he gives the penitent absolution.

But, in the first place, when we come to look at the formula of absolution itself, we find that it cannot be used, at least in any but a non-natural sense: "absolve thee from ALL thy sins." What! absolve from all, if one only has been mentioned? The difficulty has been felt, and we know of more than one instance in which the form has been altered into, "I absolve thee from this thy sin." We need scarcely remark—but that we have heard the objection made *bona fide*—that the objection does not apply to all confession subsequent to the first. "*All thy sins*," means, of course, all that have to be confessed—all that are unabsolved, all

which can, to speak technically, form the matter of the Sacrament.

Thus, then, were this all, we should call it a matter of gross negligence, had the Church of England, intending to allow of partial confession, supplied us with a form only which cannot apply to it. But we have to remember something of far greater importance. The Prayer Book presupposes and assumes a large undefined, but therefore recognised, body of religious feeling and ecclesiastical practice. At the time of the Reformation, the whole theory and practice of confession was perfectly well known. No man could have dreamed of a partial confession. The Church must have laid down, clearly and unmistakeably, that she meant it to be allowed, had this been her intention, exactly as she *did* lay down, clearly and unmistakeably, that she meant confession no longer to be compulsory. She no more prescribed the matter, than she did the manner, of the rite. We, indeed, with enlarged experience, know how soon things which seem universally known, will be generally forgotten;—and can see that various matters, taken for granted in the Prayer Book, ought to have been put down in black and white. But it is only the simplest fact that the exhortation before Confession, the form of Absolution, and the fol-

lowing Prayer, in our present Visitation Office, are taken with scarcely a verbal change from the old Salisbury Manual, that is to say from the recognised, and so far established form of what is called Auricular Confession ; the forms being retained retain the thing. Can there be a stronger proof that the Confession in both is the same ? Again, there is another consideration.

Never be it forgotten that we are bound by the old English constitutions and canons, so far as they are not contradicted by some subsequent enactment of Church and State. To confess *every* remembered sin had been enjoined in many and many a constitution from the Council of Lateran downwards. And other facts the Reformers might reasonably trust.

But, even had the Church of England seemed to allow the practice, we should have been taught by her in other parts of her ritual a more excellent way. In this surely, above all things, we are bound to regard, as she so expressly teaches us, the Lirinensian dogma. The question would then turn on this : Is partial absolution worth anything ? Can it justify the sinner ? Can it restore one who is out of grace to a state of grace ? If, according to the rule which the Church of England has herself given us, it *cannot* :—then the fact that the

Church had not forbidden it (even if it were so) could not justify us in using it. For example, if any priest chose to employ as his formula of absolution that in the Daily Service, or that in the Communion Office, he could not be said to impugn any positive precept of the English Church; but his employing this would not therefore absolve his penitent, or be equivalent to *I absolve thee from all thy sins*.

But is partial confession, therefore, by universal consent, invalid? We are not writing a theological article; and, therefore, we confine ourselves to this fact, which is capable of historical proofs. The necessity of a detailed confession of sins was never denied, except by confessed and acknowledged heretics, till the Reformation. Passages in the very earliest centuries, which ought to be *loci classici* on the subject, are:—

In Tertullian:—

Plerosque publicationem sui aut suffugere, aut de die in diem differre præsumo, pudoris magis memores quam salutis: velut illi qui, in partibus verecundioribus corporis contractâ vexatione, conscientiam medentium vitant, et ita cum erubescentiâ suâ pereunt . . . videlicet si quid humanæ nolitiae subduxerimus, proinde et Deum celabimus?—*De Pœnitent.*

In Origen:—

If we have done anything in secret, or have committed sin in the hidden thoughts of the heart,—all will be pub-

lished by him who is at once the accuser of, and inciter to, sin. If, therefore, in our lifetime, we are beforehand with him, and become our own accusers, we shall escape the malice of the devil.—*In Levit. Hom.* 3.

S. Cyprian :—

How much better are they both in faith and hope, who, although forced thereto by no open crime of sacrifice or *libellus*, yet, since the thought of such a thing entered into their mind, confess this also to the Priests of GOD in simplicity and sorrow.—*Serm. de Lapsis*.

S. Gregory of Nyssa :—

Show with all confidence to him [the Priest] the hidden secrets of the mind, as thou wouldest make manifest hidden wounds to the physician.—*Orat. in Mul. Peccat*.

These are the most striking of early passages : in later centuries the authorities are numberless.

Do we, then, think it possible, that the practice of Confession should remain on the same footing on which it stands at present ? Most certainly not. We want, strictly speaking, no alteration, but simply a development of those rules which still exist. Assuming—in common with almost all Anglican divines—that the Church of England meant to make no difference between her own confession before the Reformation and after it, save only in the one point of its being non-compulsory, we yet feel that rules are needed,—*a*. As to the minister ; *β*. As to the form ; *γ*. As to the place

of confession. These we need in common with Rome : but the non-compulsory nature of our own rite renders yet another restriction necessary,—
 δ. As to those who are to be received to confession.

α. As to the minister. Now here, as every one knows, our Prayer Book, as it stands, gives the Power of the Keys as unrestrictedly as CHRIST Himself bestowed them. “Let him come to me, or to some other discreet and learned minister,” allowing any penitent to go to any priest : here our Church breaks up,—*quoad* this office—the Parochial system,—and lays no further limit to her permission than that he who desires to confess should believe the priest to whom he “opens his grief” to be “discreet and learned.” But, as every one also knows, in the Roman Church, not every priest, but only he who is “approved,” and he only for the time that he is approved, can give absolution, except only *in extremis*. Further, that in most dioceses, certain cases of extreme sin are reserved to the Bishop; and certain others to the See of Rome. The case is the same, for the most part, in the Eastern Church, where we have a distinct office for “making a confessor,”—and where he that is so made receives a document called the *ἐνταλτήριον*, whereby the *λειτουργημα τῆς πνευματικῆς πατρότητος* is conferred on him; though

here there are no reserved cases. Now, surely it would be desirable to fix a certain age, beneath which confessions, except *in extremis*, are not to be received. A man—we had almost said a lad—of four-and-twenty, called to receive the confession of some hoary sinner,—or of some Belgravian belle,—would find either pretty much beyond his power of comprehension. *Fas est et ab hoste doceri*. Michelet, in his “Priests, Women, and Families,” has some excellent remarks on this subject,—where he represents a Parisian lady, whose life is one long intrigue of fashion and its adjuncts, kneeling to the young priest but just set free from the seminary,—and here, instead of his directing her, it is she who in very truth is directing him, and in the wrong direction too. As a man can be a bishop at thirty, it would be impossible to fix the period at which he may become a confessor *later* than that: but surely it ought not to be very much earlier.

β. Then, secondly: There surely ought to be some kind of examination, as to whether the future confessor has mastered the first and easiest principles of casuistry. In the Caroline times they at least were more careful on this head. Jeremy Taylor and Sanderson—to say nothing of other divines—were able, if not always sound,

casuists. But, as it is, a young man may find himself called on to hear a confession, who has never given a moment's thought to the subject;—never read a page on it;—is profoundly and confessedly ignorant of its first principles. Were the thing possible, how we should wish that a work on the general principles of confession, adapted to our times and to our nation, could meet with some, however faint, semi-official quasi-sanction, could be recommended by one of our prelates as “a good book on the whole!” But were such a publication attempted, we know what would be the result:—how meetings would be summoned in a hundred town-halls against this second Dens,—and how the howl poured forth against it would soon dispose of any episcopal approbation which it might have received. If we had to recommend a few works on the subject—such as might be tolerably sufficient for the parish priest's library—they would be,

The *Institutio Confessariorum* of Saint Charles Borromeo;

The Mechlin Catechism: *Tractatus de Sacramento Pœnitentiæ*;

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The *Institutio Confessariorum* of Martin For-

narius (these two may be had bound together); and the *Amor Pœnitens* of Neercassel, Bishop of Castoria: a work, the deep learning of which is only exceeded by its piety and unction.

γ. But, thirdly, We are also inclined to believe that a confessor should be a married man. There are many reasons for this. The danger to himself under peculiar cases, if he be not: the far greater insight it gives him into the especial wants and failings of *children*, and, to some extent, of women: the greater obstacle which is opposed to any idea of earthly affection arising between the priest and the penitent. For let us have courage to look the matter in the face, and not concern ourselves for the laughter of our Roman friends or Roman enemies. This has been proved, by unhappy experience in our Church, no impossibility. As things stand at present, the mere declaration of a priest that he intends to live a celibate life is worth nothing: hence the desirability of having married confessors only. In the Eastern Church, where the marriage of the priesthood involves a complication unknown to the West, the custom is that the wives and families of the secular clergy should confess to the protopope of the district.

But however this may be, the necessity of some examination before a priest could be licensed as a

confessor is self-evident. The profound ignorance of the commonest rules of casuistry, or the first principles of moral philosophy on the one hand, and the total want of acquaintance with the working of the human mind on the other, render this essential. But, in all these matters, we are at present met by an insuperable difficulty.

What, if the bishop of the diocese shall have declared his resolution "to put down" confession? What, when he withdraws the licence of any curate who practises it, and refuses a curate to the incumbent who is known to approve it? If we are to go to such an one for licences to receive confession, the whole thing will be at once crushed. No: sad as the state of things now is, it must remain so, until the practice of confession, in health as well as in sickness, is openly recognised in, and sanctioned by, the Church of England.

But what, things remaining as they are, if an individual bishop were to forbid any of his clergy to receive confession (save *in extremis*) without undergoing an examination, and receiving a licence from him? while guaranteeing that licence, *bona fide*, to such as shall pass that examination, and promising a sufficient supply of discreet and learned ministers for his diocese, what then would be the duty of his clergy?

We are not given to exaggerate episcopal authority, nor are we desirous to turn our bishops into little popes. But in such a case, the priests of that diocese would, without doubt, be necessarily bound to submit to such an examination, and to abstain from exercising their innate right without such a licence. We do not mean to say that, while the Church of England gives the exercise of the power of the keys so widely and unrestrainedly as she does, any such limitation on the part of a diocesan could deprive his priests of their jurisdiction, did they choose to exercise it. It would then be a case of *fieri non debuit, factum valet*, and the laity would probably give an emphasis to the authority of their diocesan, by resorting only to such priests as he should have approved.

For see, if the rite were publicly sanctioned, how much that is obnoxious to public feeling would at once be done away. The secrecy with which a confession is now almost necessarily conducted is one of the things most abhorrent to English ideas. Yet, to receive it, openly, before God and man, in a church would, as things are, be almost impossible. We do not mean that the so-called confessional which has sprung up on the Continent within the last two centuries is either necessary or

desirable. Till after the Reformation, as may be seen in illuminations and similar drawings, the priest simply sat on an ordinary chair, and the penitent knelt by his side; and if it were ever felt that a material partition between them were desirable, all we can say is, God help the Church which is in such a state of corruption!

Again, the very position of the priest, strange as it may seem, needs to be defined. We have heard of more than one instance in which he, as well as the penitent, is in the habit of *kneeling*. Further, it is not unusual to lay the hand on the head of the penitent, during the pronouncement of the words of absolution: a practice, it is needless to say, for which there neither is, nor ever was, the slightest authority.

It would be well, also, that a particular form of absolution should be authorized. We know, indeed, that the form has always varied exceedingly; and that while the words, "I absolve thee from all thy sins, in the name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST," are pronounced, the adjuncts are of little moment; yet it would spare much trouble, if one particular form of words were enjoined. Surely, this might be done by each bishop in his own diocese, till it shall be possible

for the Church of England to authorise it in her corporate capacity.

δ. As to the other point of restriction of those who are to go to confession, all that we say at present is that *some* regulation is necessary.

And now, one word in conclusion.

It is all very well, in complaisance to a howling Protestant public, to promise that confession shall be "*put down*,"—no doubt it is possible to persecute the incumbents, and it is very easy to ostracise the curates who practise it. But we would earnestly call on our Fathers in God to look at the question calmly and dispassionately. The number of those who confess is increasing daily; increasing in an accelerated ratio; increasing with a force that cannot be resisted: increasing too (to a far greater extent than authorities are aware of) among men; increasing, too, as we are assured, the more since public notice has been attracted to confession. Now, what do they intend to do with respect to these persons? Our Bishops know that the Church of England—to say the very least—*allows* confession. They know that if any of her priests were to refuse to hear one, he would render himself liable to civil penalties. They cannot stop it. As to the dangers—dangers accruing alike to those who make and to those

who receive confessions—we are at one with those of our bishops who are most sensitively alive to them: and we would gladly believe that it is only in an earnest and devout dread of those dangers, that some of our bishops have spoken only on one side with respect to confession. Of course they do not desire to drive those who know the blessing, the comfort, the untold benefits of confession, to seek absolution in another communion. But do they really mean this? Would any bishop venture to say,—“I had rather that those of my laity who are in the habit of regular confession, and will not give it up, went over to Rome?” If they would, God forgive *them*, and have pity on their poor flock!—but, if they would not, we conjure them to pause in their present system. Now we do not believe that the authorities would have expressed themselves as they have occasionally done, had they known the undercurrent which is setting in towards the object of their special hatred. Look at Evangelicalism in 1790 and in 1840. Hated, abhorred, ridiculed, persecuted at the former epoch, it becomes the dominant religious power at the latter;—and in half that time had fairly put on its “silver slippers.” It is not impossible that the doctrines and practices which are now so unpopular may, in twenty years

(for the march of events is infinitely more rapid than half a century ago) be recognised and authoritative. But however that may be, we would earnestly entreat authorities to pause, ere they commit themselves to further opposition. Confession must and will prevail,—in the Church of England or out of it. We need not say that our most earnest prayer would seek for the regulation of such confession as the Church of England has always sanctioned;—it will be the fault of our bishops, if it assumes a development out of it. Let them regulate what they cannot prohibit, and what, giving them, as they deserve, credit for zeal for the salvation of souls, they really do not wish to prohibit.

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